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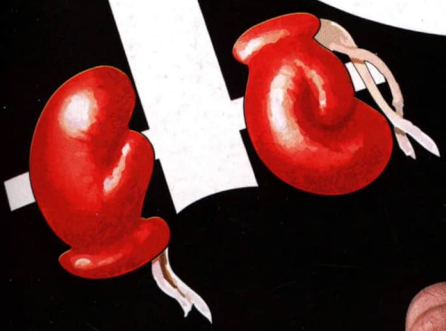

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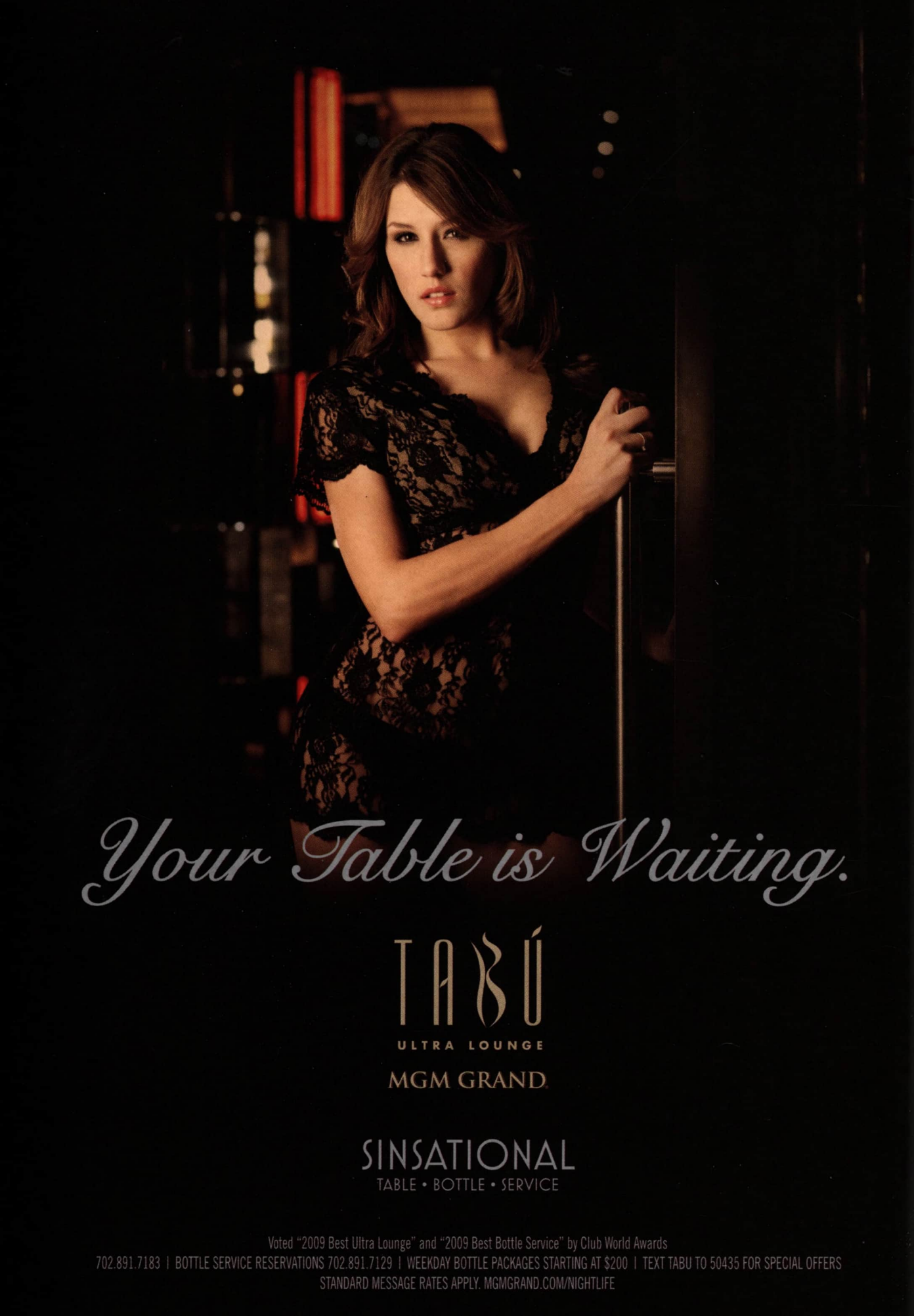
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Volume 89, No. 2 February 2010

The RING

Careful What You Wish For

The boxing world is on fire, engulfed in the flames of anticipation. The possibility of a Manny Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather fight has captured the imagination like no other in recent memory. The overwhelming consensus is that the match is absolutely the greatest thing that could happen to our eternally embattled and incredibly resurgent sport.

I'm not so sure.

The reason is simple: It promises to be a stinker!

Remember when Mayweather and Oscar De La Hoya fought? The biggest money-maker in boxing history, right? A pay-per-view bonanza so large that it floored even the folks who promoted and televised it.

But what did the mainstream media (you know, the same idiots who christened Mayweather-De La Hoya "The Fight To Save Boxing") say the day after the fight?

Boxing is dead because it had been a boring fight. Forget the unprecedented financial success. The fight sucked.

For all the media's lack of insight, there is a perverse wisdom to this counterintuitive verdict. It is not the number of PPV buys that brings back customers. It's great fights.

Anybody who thinks that Pacquiao-Mayweather is going to be a great fight hasn't been paying attention. When was the last time Mayweather was in a great fight? The Ricky Hatton fight had a great "finish," but was hardly a great "fight."

True, part of that is because Mayweather is such a fantastic boxer. But let me put it this way: If Floyd had Sugar Ray Robinson's mindset, he just might be the greatest of all-time as he claims to be.

But that's not who Mayweather is, and he fights the way he does because of who he is, plain and simple. And there's nothing wrong with that. Look at all he's accomplished so far.

Moreover, don't expect Pacquiao's whirlwind aggression to compensate for Mayweather's safety-first style. There's an outside possibility Pacquiao could impose his will enough to force a good fight, but not a great one. It takes two to do that. And unlike Pacquiao, the last thing on Mayweather's mind will be to "make everybody happy."

Bob Arum is a smart man, and my guess is that he wouldn't let Pacquiao anywhere near Mayweather if there wasn't such an obscene amount of money to be made. He knows as well as anybody that the fight could turn out to be a gigantic buzz killer.

But the smell of money is too strong to resist, and you can't blame anyone for selling the paying public what it wants. And it wants Mayweather-Pacquiao. There's no doubt about that, which is perfectly understandable. Not only would it be the two best fighters in the world going at it, the combatants' contrasting personalities, back-stories, and lifestyles would create a once-in-a-generation storyline.

Some fights are just meant to be and Pacquiao-Mayweather appears to be one of them. Like an avalanche sweeping all obstacles aside in a rush to fruition, the fight has taken on a life of its own. It's going to happen, and it should. I have no beef with the necessities of history.

Yet, still I worry.

I have this haunting feeling that we've already seen the Pacquiao-Mayweather fight, and it is going to look a lot like the final few rounds of the Pacquiao-Cotto fight—one guy running and the other guy chasing him.

And if that's not bad enough, wait until you read the headlines the next day.

Nigel Collins
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[Opening Shot]

Meet The Neighbors

Just kidding! Mike Tyson, wife Lakiha Spicer, and daughter Milan won't be turning up at your door with a lima bean casserole any time soon. This family portrait was taken in Maldon, England, in November, where Poppa Tyson was taking part in something called "Come Back To The Fans Tour."

PHOTO BY MARCO SECCHI/GETTY IMAGES

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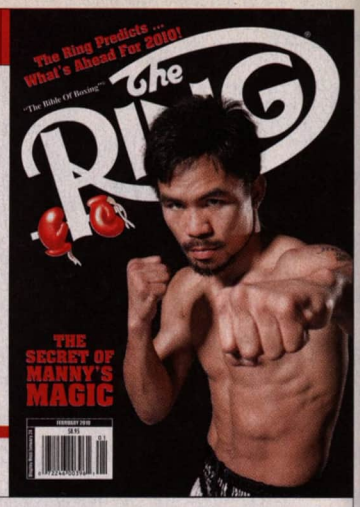

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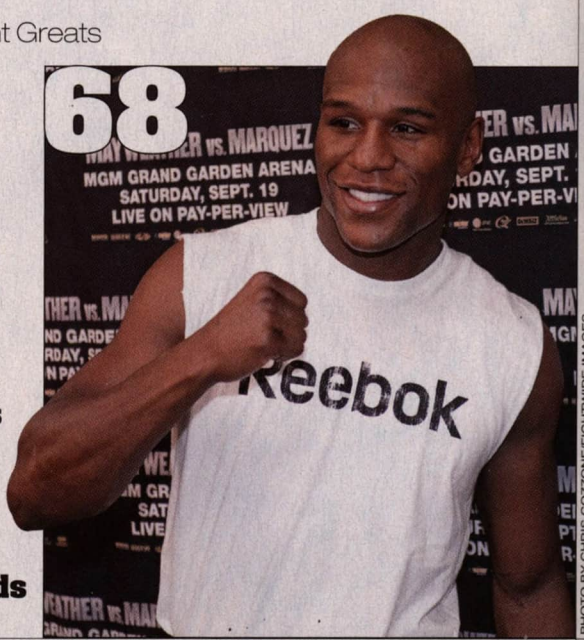

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PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

PHOTO BY CHRIS ROYLE/HOGANPHOTOS

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A Matter Of Life And Death

We might never know why Francisco Rodriguez died and Z Gorres survived, but there is no doubt that the brain bleeds they both suffered were caused by boxing. The twin tragedies took place a week apart, one in Las Vegas, the other in Philadelphia. Both reinforce the painful truth that boxing is a perilous undertaking in which the participants place their lives on the line every time they fight.

The House of Blues (located inside the Mandalay Bay Hotel), where Gorres was struck down on November 13, is similar to the Blue Horizon, where Rodriguez was fatally injured on November 20. While the House of Blues is fancier, both are small, intimate venues where the close proximity of the crowd seems conducive to all-action matches.

Even so, Gorres' 10-round bantamweight bout with Colombian Luis Melendez was relatively one-sided in favor of the Filipino for the first nine rounds. Gorres dropped Melendez in the third and was way ahead on all three scorecards going into the last round. Then, with the fight in its final minute, Melendez unleashed a wicked left that caught Gorres flush. The blow sent him flying backward, the back of his neck bouncing off the bottom rope as he crashed to the floor.

It was something of a surprise when Gorres beat referee Vic Drakulich's count, but he not only regained his feet in time, he made it through the final few seconds until the final bell. After the unanimous decision in his favor was announced, Gorres returned to his corner and collapsed.

Less than five minutes later, he was being wheeled away on a gurney, an oxygen mask strapped to his face. The next bout was still taking place when word reached ringside that Gorres, 27, was already being operated on at the University Medical Center.

By the time the 25-year-old Rodriguez entered the ring a week later to face North Philly's Teon Kennedy for the USBA super bantamweight title, Gorres had dramatically improved and, according to medical reports had a "good chance to live a functional life, but may need to rehabilitate his left side."

Bernard Fernandez, who covered the Kennedy-Rodriguez fight for the *Philadelphia Daily News*, wrote that the bout was a "slugfest that featured scintillating two-way action" and that "the two men frequently squared off for toe-to-toe exchanges, to the appreciation of the near-sellout crowd."

But by the end of the ninth round, however, Rodriguez' "arms were limp by his sides," said promoter J Russell Peltz. "He had nothing left; he was spent."

Nonetheless, Rodriguez came out for the 10th round, but when Kennedy continued his assault, referee Benjy Esteves

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Gorres is taken from the ring

stopped the fight at the 1:52 mark. Shortly after Rodriguez was helped to his stool, his body went limp and his breathing became labored. When ring physicians and EMS personnel were unable to revive him, the boxer was transported to Hahnemann University Hospital, where he underwent emergency surgery.

Sadly, Rodriguez did not respond to treatment as well as Gorres, and it soon became clear that he would never recover from his injuries. Approximately 24 hours after his last fight, Rodriguez, a native of Mexico living in Chicago, was removed from the machine that helped him breathe and died.

Seven of Rodriguez' organs have been donated to five people, according to the Gift of Life organ donor program. "He's not only in heaven, but also still walking the Earth in other people," said Rodriguez' brother, Alex Rodriguez.

Rodriguez left behind his wife, Sonia, and their five-month-old daughter, Ginette. A fund has been established to help them. Donations can be sent to:

The Francisco Rodriguez Fund
C/o National Bank of Chicago
1201 W. Harrison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607

—Nigel Collins

Giving Back

In June 2009, THE RING joined Oscar De La Hoya on tour of a construction site at 1114 South Lorena Street in Los Angeles, where the new Oscar De La Hoya Animo Charter High School was being built. Even before everybody donned hardhats and entered the building, word spread that Oscar was in the neighborhood, prompting dozens of people, old and young, to crowd around for autographs and photos. He is one of them, and everybody was thrilled that he was helping bring a state-of-the-art school to their community.

The school was founded in 2003 in an older building on South Figueroa Street, and has been a huge success. Ninety-five percent of its students are from low-income households, but 70 percent of the graduates are accepted to four-year universities. Moreover, it received an API score of 726, 152 points higher than the average of other local schools. Perhaps most impressively, the school was ranked as the 53rd best high school in America in the December 2008 issue of *US News & World Report*.

The new school is 51,281 square feet, with 25 classrooms (including a science and computer lab), a boxing gym, and a rooftop lunch/play area. It holds 550 students from grades nine through 12.

When De La Hoya attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 29, it was the first new public school opened in the Boyle Heights neighborhood in 80 years.

PHOTO BY CARLOS DELGADO/HOGAN PHOTOS/GBP

Ribbon-cutting ceremony officially opens new charter school

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

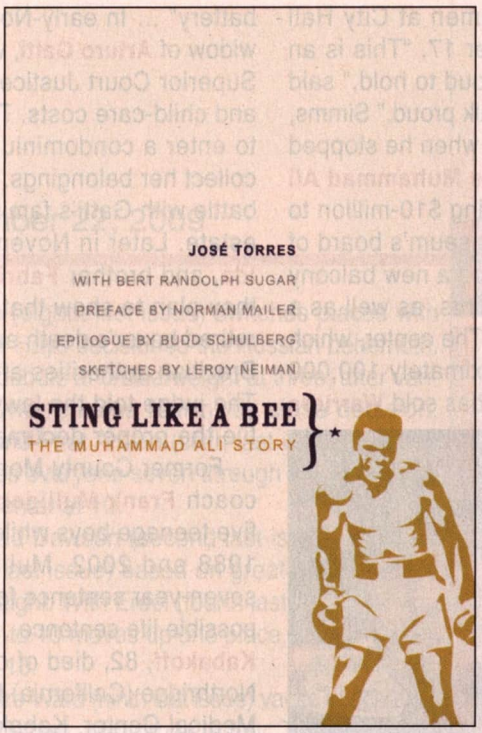
DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
10/23/09	Victor Fonseca KO 9 Al Seeger	Showtime	jf	C+	B	B-
Consistent body attack and late-round rally saves favorite						
10/23/09	Freddy Hernandez W 10 Damian Frias	Showtime	w	B-	C+	C-
This is why boxers over 30 should not be on ShoBox						
10/30/09	Antonio Escalante KO 2 Carlos Fulgencio	PPV	jf	C	D	B-
Bad opponent puts up good fight before kayo loss						
10/30/09	Hector Camacho Jr. W 10 Yori Boy Campas	PPV	jm	C-	D	D
Did anybody actually pay to see this?						
10/31/09	Antonio DeMarco KO 10 Jose Alfaro	Showtime	l	B	B-	C+
DeMarco fights on Showtime enough to merit his own series						
10/31/09	Yonnhy Perez W 12 Joseph Agbeko	Showtime	b	A-	A	A
Did someone hit the fast forward button before airing the fight?						
11/04/09	Jason Litzau W 10 Johnnie Edwards	ESPN2	jl	C	C	C
Former Marine beaten on a Marine base on Veterans Day card						
11/07/09	Alexander Frenkel KO 1 Kelvin Davis	PPV	c	C	C	C
One time cruiser titleholder Davis 0-7-1 in last two years						
11/07/09	Robert Helenius KO 3 Taras Bidenko	PPV	h	B-	B-	C+
Why do European prospects look better than American contenders?						
11/07/09	John Ruiz KO 7 Adnan Serin	PPV	h	C+	D	D
Europeans fans now feeling the pain of watching Ruiz box						
11/07/09	David Haye W 12 Nikolay Valuev	PPV	h	A-	B+	C-
Boxing's version of a pigeon versus a statue						
11/07/09	Alfredo Angulo KO 3 Harry Joe Yorgey	HBO	jm	B-	C-	C+
WBO now has one regular and two interim junior middleweight titleholders						
11/07/09	Chad Dawson W 12 Glen Johnson	HBO	lhw	A-	A-	C
Dawson's foul protector was so high it chaffed his nipples						
11/13/09	Juan Rosas W 12 Federico Catubay	TV Azteca	b	B	C+	C+
Catubay is best 16-fight loser we've seen in years						
11/13/09	Michel Rosales W 10 Mark Melligen	TV Azteca	w	C+	B	B-
Solid gatekeeper scores second straight decision upset						
11/14/09	Alfonso Gomez Tech W 6 Jesus Soto Karass	PPV	w	B-	B	C+
Wow, maybe Gomez really is a Contender?						
11/14/09	Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 10 Troy Rowland	PPV	m	C	D	D
Wake us when Junior fights someone that makes us care						
11/14/09	Yuri Foreman W 12 Daniel Santos	PPV	jm	B	B-	C
New titlest will be an ordained Rabbi in three years						
11/14/09	Manny Pacquiao KO 12 Miguel Cotto	PPV	w	A+	A+	B+
Henry Armstrong is shaking his head in amazement						
11/20/09	Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. KO 7 Genaro Garcia	Telemundo	jf	B-	B+	B-
Forget Chavez, Hearns, and Camacho; Vazquez is the most talented Junior						
11/21/09	Andre Ward Tech W 11 Mikkel Kessler	Showtime	sm	A	A-	B
"Super Six" tourney just got more interesting						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Boxing Bookshelf



Sting Like A Bee, The Muhammad Ali Story, was first published in 1971 with the sort of hoopla that contemporary fans couldn't fathom. Not only was Ali emerging as a world phenomenon, but the book also was the debut of former boxing champion turned author Jose Torres. The book came with a number of extras, as if to prove that the hip intelligentsia had given Torres their stamp of approval: Norman Mailer wrote the preface; Budd Schulberg added an epilogue; and Leroy Neiman provided sketches. Burt Randolph Sugar, at the time the publisher of *Boxing Illustrated*, was onboard as a co-writer (unacknowledged in the first edition). Torres, to his everlasting credit, didn't embarrass those who'd championed him. Mailer probably wished he could've said the same about Jack Henry Abbott.

If you missed *Sting Like a Bee* the first time around, it's been reissued (University of Nebraska Press, 223 pages, paperback, $17.95). Readers will still find it to be a thought provoking ramble through Ali's early years, climaxing with his classic 1971 bout with Joe Frazier. Torres was an unabashed Ali fan, but that didn't prevent him from taking an objective look at his subject (Ali refused to autograph copies of the book because of an unflattering episode involving a prostitute), but the book's real strength is not in the gossip Torres shared, but in his ability to read the thoughts of a fighter.

Torres was bold enough to proclaim Ali a genius (an unpopular idea at the time), but also wondered if some of Ali's magic was due to a kind of star-crossed luck. Torres makes constant references to "other worldly" forces being at work during Ali's fights. On paper, Ali's unorthodox style never should've succeeded, and Torres is perplexed and fascinated by Ali often being magnificent despite his mistakes. Torres took special glee when the guru himself, Cus D'Amato, was left baffled by Ali's success.

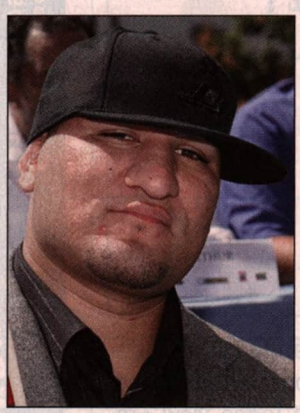
Torres is also handy with his depictions of Ali's opponents at the time, particularly Frazier. In Torres' view, Frazier was a tough man who had committed himself to a thankless career. Torres picked Frazier to win, and the reader can almost feel Torres' panic as the Fight of the Century turns into a nip and tuck battle, shifting momentum until the final bell.

Throughout a writing life that also included a controversial book about Mike Tyson, plus many columns for ESPNdeportes.com, Spanish language newspapers, and various magazines (including THE RING,) Torres never tired of examining the complexities of fighters. He believed that even the crudest of pugs were more complex than the average columnist or fan could comprehend. Torres was never sentimental, and never offered hackneyed tributes to a "fighter's heart." Instead, Torres wrote about men being frightened to the point of diarrhea, and how victory is achieved not with brute strength, but with intelligence. For Torres, who died last January at age 72, the battles raging in the ring were nothing compared to the flurry of activity inside a fighter's head.

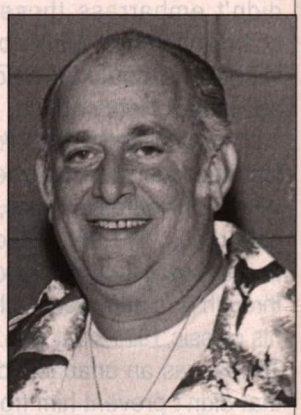
—Don Stradley

Outside The Ropes

Former WBA junior middleweight titleholder **Travis Simms**, 38, was sworn in as Councilmen at City Hall in Norwalk, Connecticut, on November 17. "This is an exciting opportunity and a title I am proud to hold," said Simms. "I look forward to making Norwalk proud." Simms, 27-1 (20), last fought on June 2, 2009, when he stopped **Marcus Luck** in the third round ... **The Muhammad Ali Center** in Louisville, Kentucky, is seeking $10-million to expand. **Ina Bond**, a member of the museum's board of directors, said the expansion will include a new balcony space that can be used for special events, as well as a humidity-controlled archive and library. The center, which cost $84-million to build, draws approximately 100,000 visitors a year ... The Seminole Nation has sold **Warriors Boxing** to **Leon Margules**, who was the Seminoles' executive director. "The only thing that changes is the ownership," said Margules. "We will have the same staff, same office, same telephone numbers and website" ... WBC president **Jose Sulaiman** has suspended heavyweight **Chris Arreola** for six months for dropping the F-bomb following his defeat to WBC titleholder **Vitali Klitschko** on September 26 in Los Angeles. While Sulaiman can prevent the Riverside, California, slugger from competing in a WBC event, the so-called suspension has no legal sanding in the United States. Arreola still has his California boxing license and is therefore free to fight ... Former heavyweight champion **Mike Tyson**, 43, was arrested after an alleged altercation with a celebrity photographer at Los Angeles International Airport. The photographer, who suffered a cut on his forehead, was also arrested. "There's a lot of different versions to the story," said Los Angeles Airport Police Sergeant **Jim Holcomb**. "That's all going to come out later. Both individuals are going to be pressing charges of battery" ... In early-November, **Amanda Rodrigues**, the widow of **Arturo Gatti**, was awarded $37,000 by Montreal Superior Court Justice **Paul Chaput** to cover legal fees and child-care costs. The judge also allowed Rodrigues to enter a condominium she once shared with Gatti to collect her belongings. Rodrigues is embroiled in a legal battle with Gatti's family over his estimated $5.6-million estate. Later in November, lawyers for Gatti's mother, **Ida**, and brother **Fabrizio** informed Judge Chaput that they plan to show that Rodrigues is responsible for the retired boxer's death even though she was vindicated by Brazilian authorities after his death was ruled a suicide. The judge told the lawyer that the first step would be to file the proper documentation outlining the allegations ... Former County Monaghan (Northern Ireland) boxing coach **Frank Mulligan**, 64, pleaded guilty to abusing five teenage boys while he was coaching them between 1988 and 2002. Mulligan, who is already serving a seven-year sentence for abusing two other boys, faces a possible life sentence ... Eccentric manager/trainer **Harry Kabakoff**, 82, died of cardiac arrest on November 17 at Northridge (California) Hospital Medical Center. Kabakoff was born Melville Himmelfarb in St. Louis, but changed his name, to honor his uncle, who had been a boxer. After serving in the Navy during World War II, he moved to Los Angles and had a brief career as a boxer before becoming a manager, trainer, and assistant matchmaker. At one time, Kabakoff handled more than 60 boxers (including former welterweight champion **Don Jordan**), but was best known for his work with bantamweight power puncher **Jesus Pimentel**. One of Kabakoff's most famous publicity stunts was dressing himself and Pimentel as Batman and Robin, and calling themselves Fatman and Bobbin. "He was maybe the most colorful character in boxing that I've ever met, and everyone in boxing is colorful," publicist **Bill Caplan** told the *Los Angeles Times*. "He was a rogue and a rascal, and he was funny and lovable" ... Former referee and judge **Lou Filippo**, 83, died on November 2 in Los Angeles, California. Filippo boxed professionally as a lightweight from 1947 to 1957, compiling a 23-9-3 (8) record. He began judging and refereeing in the mid-1970s and went on to work many high-profile fights, including the 1987 middleweight championship bout between **Ray Leonard** and **Marvin Hagler**, which Filippo scored 115-113 in Hagler's favor. Filippo also made numerous TV and movie appearances, including five of the *Rocky* films.



Arreola: F-Bomb champ



Kabakoff: Dead at 82

Quotable

"Heck, he was so good they might have paid to watch him tie his shoelaces, if he didn't already have people in his entourage to do that for him."

—Associated Press boxing writer Tim Dahlberg, commenting on Manny Pacquiao fans' willingness to pay $45 to see their hero sing.

"I used to hate it when you'd see fighters get really popular then you couldn't get near them."

—Former junior welterweight champion Ricky Hatton explaining why he's always been so fan-friendly

Ratings Analysis

"The Bible Of Boxing"

For Period Ended November 22, 2009

Heavyweights: David Haye (eighth last issue) switches places with Nicolay Valuev (fifth last issue), after Haye decisioned the Russian behemoth.

Cruiserweights: Zsolt Erdei debuts at cruiserweight at three, after vanquishing Giacobbe Fragomeni (who remains fourth) by close decision. Guillermo Jones (third last issue) and Firat Arslan (sixth last issue) exit due to inactivity. Their departures enables everyone seven through 10 to move up one place each, and B.J. Flores to enter at 10.

Light Heavyweights: Chad Dawson (second last issue) switches places with Bernard Hopkins (first last issue) based on greater activity and quality of opposition at light heavyweight. With Erdei (fourth last issue) moving to cruiserweight, everyone from four to 10 moves up one place, creating room for Vyacheslav Uzelkov to debut at 10.

Super Middleweights: Andre Ward (ninth last issue) vaults to one after dominating Mikkel Kessler (first last issue), who drops to four. The reshuffling causes everyone rated four through eight to slide down one spot each.

Middleweights: No changes.

Junior Middleweights: Jamie Moore (eighth last issue) departs after losing to Ryan Rhodes, who debuts at nine. Alfredo Angulo (ninth last issue) moves to eight.

Welterweights: Manny Pacquiao leaps to one after demolishing Miguel Cotto. "Pac-Man's" inclusion bumps down everyone rated one through nine each one place, forcing out Vyacheslaw Senchenko (tenth last issue).

Junior Welterweights: No changes.

Lightweights: No changes.

Junior Lightweights: Vitali Tajbert replaces Humberto Gutierrez at nine, after scoring a decision victory over the Mexican.

Featherweights: No changes.

Junior Featherweights: No changes.

Bantamweights: Yonnhy Perez (fifth last issue) switches places with Joseph Agbeko (fourth last issue) after Perez won a close decision over "King Kong."

Junior Bantamweights: Marvin Sonsona (ninth last issue) can no longer make 115 and exits, replaced by Daigo Nakahiro, who comes in at nine.

Flyweights: Julio Cesar Miranda (eighth last issue) drops to 10 after losing to Moruti Mthalane (who remains at seven), allowing Luis Concepcion (ninth last issue) and Zolani Tete (10th last issue) to each move up one place.

Junior Flyweights: Rodel Mayol (eighth last issue) jumps to three after stopping Edgar Sosa (second last issue), who sinks to four. Giovanni Segura (third last issue) moves to two, while everyone from four to seven moves down a space.

Strawweights: No changes.

Pound-for pound: Companion pieces Israel Vazquez (ninth last issue) and Rafael Marquez (10th last issue) come out due to inactivity the lack of quality opposition over the last year, replaced by Chad Dawson at nine and Paul Williams at 10.

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Welterweight/
   Welterweight
2. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Welterweight
3. **Shane Mosley**
   Welterweight
4. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Lightweight
6. **Nonito Donaire**
   Junior Bantamweight
7. **Miguel Cotto**
   Welterweight
8. **Celestino Caballero**
   Junior Featherweight
9. **Chad Dawson**
   Light Heavyweight
10. **Paul Williams**
    Junior Middleweight/
    Middleweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **ringtv.com**

The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended Date November 22, 2009

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Zsolt Erdei jumped from light heavyweight to the third-rated cruiserweight after beating Giacobbe Fragomeni

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 53-3 (47)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 38-2 (37)
2. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 17-0 (12)
3. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 35-1 (18)
4. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 25-1-1 (17)
5. **DAVID HAYE**
England 23-1 (21)
6. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 27-1 (24)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 26-0 (21)
8. **NICOLAY VALUEV**
Russia 50-2 (34)
9. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 29-1 (19)
10. **KEVIN JOHNSON**
Atlanta, GA 22-0-1 (9)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 37-1 (27)
2. **CORY SPINKS**
St. Louis, MO 37-5 (11)
3. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Belize 42-11-1 (21)
4. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina 44-1-2 (24)
5. **SERGEI DZINZIRUK**
Ukraine 36-0 (22)
6. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 32-2-1 (28)
7. **DEANDRE LATIMORE**
St. Louis, MO 20-2 (16)
8. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
Mexico 17-1 (14)
9. **RYAN RHODES**
England 43-4 (29)
10. **YURI FOREMAN**
Belarus 28-0 (8)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 43-0-2 (22)
2. **STEVEN LUEVANO**
La Puente, CA 37-1-1 (15)
3. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
Mexico 39-11-1 (23)
4. **JORGE SOLIS**
Mexico 37-2-2 (27)
5. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 28-5-1 (20)
6. **MARIO SANTIAGO**
Puerto Rico 20-1-1 (14)
7. **MARTIN HONORIO**
Mexico 25-4-1 (13)
8. **RYOL LI LEE**
Japan 13-1-1 (7)
9. **ELIO ROJAS**
Dominican Republic 21-1 (13)
10. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
Cuba 16-0 (14)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CELESTINO CABALLERO**
Panama 33-2 (23)
2. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM**
Thailand 39-1 (28)
3. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
Puerto Rico 27-0 (24)
4. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 35-4-3 (22)
5. **STEVE MOLITOR**
Canada 31-1 (12)
6. **BERNARD DUNNE**
Ireland 28-2 (15)
7. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
Panama 35-2-2 (22)
8. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
South Africa 22-2-2 (12)
9. **ANTONIO ESCALANTE**
Mexico 21-2 (13)
10. **RENDALL MUNROE**
England 20-1 (8)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
Japan 27-2 (11)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama 27-1-1 (9)
3. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO**
Ukraine 21-2-2 (7)
4. **YONNHY PEREZ**
Colombia 20-0 (14)
5. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana 27-2 (22)
6. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 22-3 (18)
7. **NEHOMAR CERMENO**
Venezuela 18-0 (10)
8. **ABNER MARES**
Mexico 19-0 (12)
9. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 39-2-2 (29)
10. **SASHA BAKHTIN**
Russia 23-0 (10)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: TOMASZ ADAMEK
Poland 39-1 (27)

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 22-2 (11)
2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 41-2-1 (31)
3. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 31-0 (17)
4. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 26-2-1 (10)
5. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 26-1 (20)
6. **VADIM TOKAREV**
Russia 26-1-1 (19)
7. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 22-1 (15)
8. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 14-1-3 (6)
9. **MATT GODFREY**
Providence, RI 20-1 (10)
10. **B.J. FLORES**
Chandler, AZ 24-0-1 (15)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 29-0 (17)
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 49-5-1 (32)
3. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 49-13-2 (33)
4. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 27-6 (19)
5. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 54-5 (40)
6. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
Tallahassee, FL 20-0 (18)
7. **JEAN PASCAL**
Haiti 24-1 (16)
8. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 26-1 (15)
9. **YUSAF MACK**
Philadelphia, PA 28-2-2 (17)
10. **VYACHESLAV UZELKOV**
Ukraine 22-0 (14)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 21-0 (13)
2. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 24-0 (19)
3. **CARL FROCH**
England 26-0 (21)
4. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 42-2 (32)
5. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 28-2 (21)
6. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 28-3-2 (19)
7. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 31-0 (25)
8. **ALLAN GREEN**
Tulsa, OK 29-1 (20)
9. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Germany 36-2 (22)
10. **KAROLY BALZSAY**
Hungary 21-1 (15)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: KELLY PAVLIK
Youngstown, OH 35-1 (31)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 33-2-1 (14)
2. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 32-3 (15)
3. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 37-1 (27)
4. **KHOREN GEVOR**
Armenia 30-4 (16)
5. **DAVID LOPEZ**
Mexico 38-12 (23)
6. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
England 25-2 (18)
7. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 37-3 (23)
8. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 22-1 (13)
9. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany 27-0 (10)
10. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 51-5-1 (25)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 50-3-2 (38)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 46-5 (39)
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
Grand Rapids, MI 40-0 (25)
4. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 34-2 (27)
5. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
Ghana 35-3 (20)
6. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 37-6 (27)
7. **ANDRE BERTO**
Winter Haven, FL 25-0 (19)
8. **CARLOS QUINTANA**
Puerto Rico 26-2 (20)
9. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 30-4 (15)
10. **ISAAC HLATSWAYO**
South Africa 29-1-1 (10)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 50-3-2 (38)

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
Palm Springs, CA 24-0 (11)
2. **RICKY HATTON**
England 45-2 (32)
3. **AMIR KHAN**
England 21-1 (15)
4. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
St. Louis, MO 19-0 (12)
5. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 35-2 (17)
6. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI**
Brooklyn, NY 26-3 (5)
7. **JUAN URANGO**
Colombia 22-2-1 (17)
8. **KENDALL HOLT**
Paterson, NJ 25-3 (13)
9. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
Argentina 27-1 (26)
10. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
Ukraine 31-3-1 (13)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 50-5-1 (37)

1. **EDWIN VALERO**
Venezuela 25-0 (25)
2. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
Australia 26-2 (21)
3. **ROLANDO REYES**
Mexico 31-4-2 (20)
4. **ALI FUNEKA**
South Africa 30-2-2 (25)
5. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 25-3 (12)
6. **ANTHONY PETERSON**
Washington, DC 29-0 (19)
7. **PAULUS MOSES**
Namibia 25-0 (17)
8. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
Venezuela 26-3-2 (20)
9. **ANTONIO DEMARCO**
Mexico 23-1-1 (17)
10. **DAVID DIAZ**
Chicago, IL 35-2-1 (17)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
Mexico 49-7-2 (32)
2. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
Gilroy, CA 24-1-1 (16)
3. **MZONKE FANA**
South Africa 29-4 (12)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico 23-0-1 (14)
5. **MALCOLM KLASSEN**
South Africa 24-5-2 (15)
6. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
South Africa 37-4-1 (19)
7. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
Mexico 21-0-1 (15)
8. **JORGE LINARES**
Venezuela 27-1 (18)
9. **VITALI TAJBERT**
Kazakhstan 19-1 (6)
10. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
England 29-0 (22)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Armenia 32-2-1 (26)
2. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan 13-1-1 (8)
3. **SIMPHIWE NONGQAYI**
South Africa 16-0 (6)
4. **HUGO CAZARES**
Mexico 30-6-2 (22)
5. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 34-3 (27)
6. **KOHEI KONO**
Japan 24-4 (8)
7. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines 22-1 (14)
8. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
Japan 14-2 (10)
9. **DAIGO NAKAHIRO**
Japan 21-2 (8)
10. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
Philippines 18-0-1 (14)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **DAISUKE NAITO**
Japan 35-2-3 (22)
2. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 73-3-1 (39)
3. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
Thailand 48-1-1 (20)
4. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 30-0-2 (19)
5. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 35-5-2 (16)
6. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan 21-0 (14)
7. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
South Africa 25-2 (16)
8. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
Panama 18-1 (13)
9. **ZOLANI TETE**
South Africa 12-0 (11)
10. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
Mexico 30-5-1 (23)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON
Puerto Rico 33-0-1 (6)

1. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 26-2 (15)
2. **GIOVANNI SEGURA**
Mexico 22-1-1 (18)
3. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 26-4-1 (20)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico 37-6 (21)
5. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 29-2-2 (20)
6. **CESAR CANCHILA**
Colombia 28-2 (22)
7. **OMAR NINO**
Mexico 28-3-1 (11)
8. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
Argentina 20-1 (10)
9. **JUANITO RUBILLAR**
Philippines 47-13-7 (23)
10. **YASUTAKA KUROKI**
Japan 21-3-1 (14)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua 24-0 (20)
2. **RAUL GARCIA**
Mexico 27-0-1 (16)
3. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
Thailand 31-0 (12)
4. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
South Africa 20-0 (15)
5. **MILAN MELINDO**
Philippines 18-0 (5)
6. **DONNIE NIETES**
Philippines 25-1-3 (14)
7. **FLORANTE CONDES**
Philippines 23-5-1 (20)
8. **JUAN PALACIOS**
Nicaragua 26-2 (21)
9. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 62-8-5 (31)
10. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 23-4 (9)

By Jeff Ryan

Going To The (Wishing) Well

Happy New Year, everyone! Join me in welcoming in the baby wearing the party hat and the glittery diaper and kicking out that hunched-over old man with the long, gray beard. (Father Time, that is, not Evander Holyfield.) We can't help but view 2010 as a year of promise in the fight game if for no other reason than we're promised one of the most saliva-generating matchups in my 26 years on the boxing beat: Manny Pacquiao vs. Floyd Mayweather. (Don't let the early posturing over purse splits scare you. Details *will* be worked out.) The mere thought of it has me all tingly. Hopefully that's superfight anticipation and not just another wire short-circuiting in my cheap laptop.

This bout is your thank-you for showing loyalty to a sport that could test the patience of Gandhi. You're forever tolerating mismatches, bad decisions, boring undercards, late starting times, insane ticket and pay-per-view prices, limited print coverage, and Lennox Lewis' ringside commentary and remaining a boxing loyalist in the hope that a classic showdown like this one will come along every so often. And let's face it: "Pac Man" vs. "Money" makes anything short of getting the WBA logo tattooed on your bicep, or joining The John Ruiz Fan Club, acceptable dues to fork over.

Pacquiao-Mayweather, as special as it may be, however, wasn't the only item on my 2010 wish list. Not to be greedy, but if there are any genies out there who are reading this in the comfort of their bottles, here are a few more wishes you folks might consider granting:

1. One more showcase event for Shane Mosley: Incredibly, "Sugar" Shane followed his impressive destruction of Antonio Margarito by climbing back into the Sugar bowl and sitting on the pantry shelf for a year. (When he should have been fending off left hooks he was instead fending off ants.) While a part of me thinks Mosley doesn't deserve another superfight payday because he's an admitted user of performance-enhancing drugs, another side believes that he's clean now and should be rewarded for beating the favored Mar-

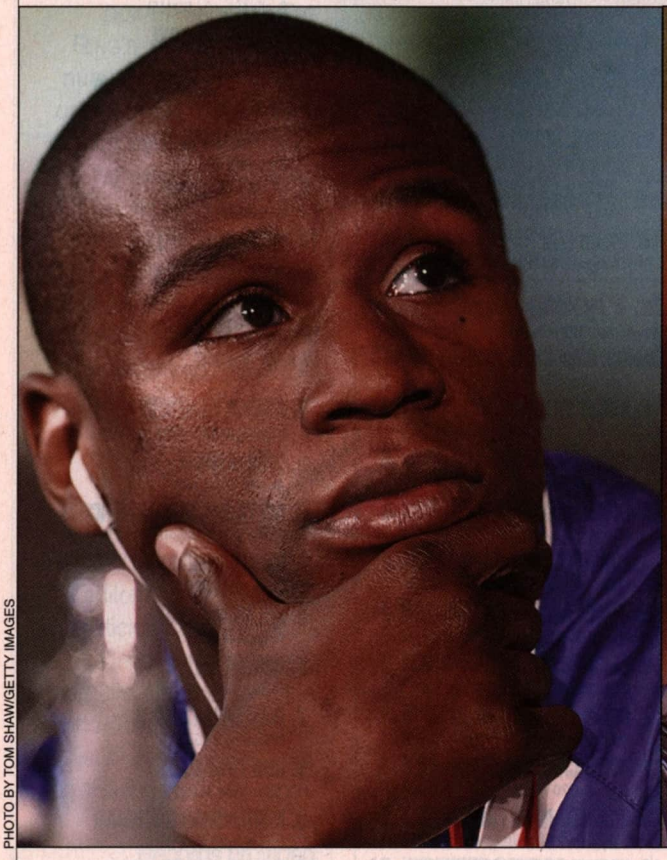


PHOTO BY TOM SHAW/GETTY IMAGES

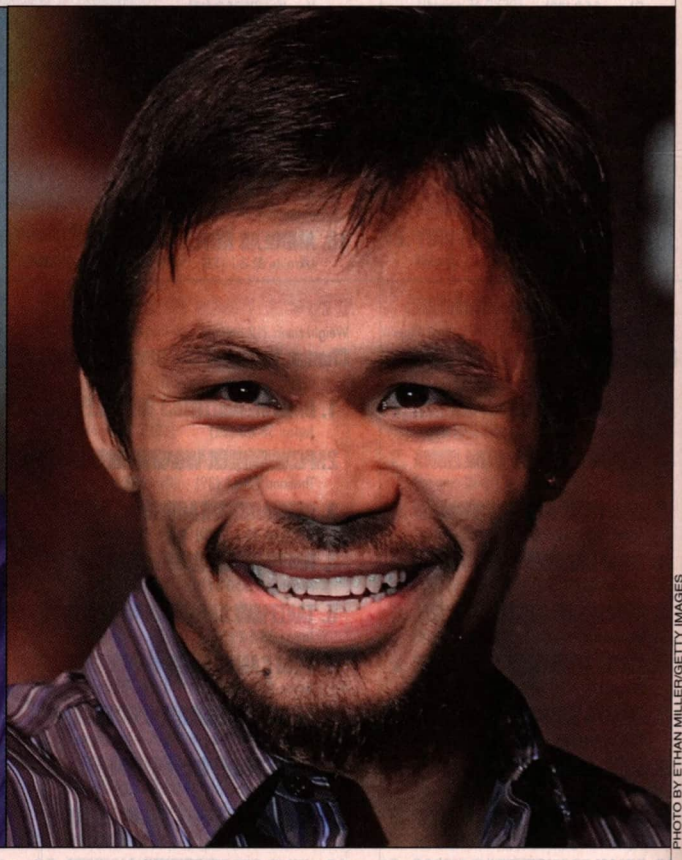


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Mayweather-Pacquiao: Saliva-generating matchup

garito, a guy who had never been stopped and was coming off a career-best win over Miguel Cotto.

Assuming the 38-year-old Mosley gets past Andre Berto on January 30, any genie with a knack for matchmaking ought to find a way to get Sugar Shane in the ring with the Pacquiao-Mayweather winner.

2. A peaceful retirement for Jermain Taylor: That is, if he does the smart thing by calling a press luncheon and telling the writers between bites of leathery roast beef that he's leaving the game to pursue other interests.

Taylor is a good kid who got my attention not when he won a pair of decisions over the great Bernard Hopkins, but *before* he'd ever thrown a punch at "B-Hop." Specifically, when Taylor had the stones to get right in the legend's face and talk smack to him. Unfortunately, Taylor never built on the momentum of those two victories, and he's now dropped four of his last five outings, three by brutal knockout. He seems to get finished off now by punches he should have seen coming a week before they were launched.

For the Taylor story to have a positive ending, knowing when to quit must be Jermain to the plot.

3. A Yankee Stadium title fight for New York City: Bob Arum has promised one, and Pacquiao-Mayweather has been rumored to be the one he's hinting at, but it doesn't really matter which main event unfolds out there around second base. Boxing in a stadium creates a special atmosphere, and even more so when the ballpark is the most famous one on earth. It's a travesty that Yankee Stadium, which played host to everyone from Joe Louis and Rocky Marciano to Henry Armstrong and Sugar Ray Robinson, only staged one main event after it was renovated (Ali-Ken Norton III), and none in its final 32 years of its existence.

The glistening new place can make up for that and start its own tradition. Hopefully, the promoters who are talking about returning the Sweet Science to the South Bronx aren't just putting up a facade. The construction workers have already done that.

4. A full recovery for Nick Charles: The *ShoBox* blow-by-blow man is swinging away in the trenches with a truly nasty opponent, bladder cancer, and he remains about as undeterred as Tony Zale going after Rocky Graziano. Charles is one of the genuine nice guys in the sport, and in a world that's full of too many stories about good people being overtaken by disease or some other hardship, we could use a result like "Charles TKO 12 Cancer" to lift all of our spirits.

5. Additional dream matchups for the fans: Sure, you're thinking that if your prayers are answered and Pacquiao-Mayweather takes place, you don't have the right to demand any other attractive battles in 2010. Well, you're wrong. Just because your date is springing for the surf and

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

If Mosley beats Berto, he deserves Pacquiao-Mayweather winner

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from boxing that Spinks to boxing that stinks:

• Yuri Foreman has mentioned fellow alphabet junior middleweight king Cory Spinks as a likely 2010 foe. That bout would be the boxing equivalent of two ninth-place singles hitters squaring off in a home run derby. Foreman and Spinks have 65 wins between them, with a grand total of 19 coming by way of knockout. We've seen badminton players who were more of a threat to hurt each other.

• Commerce, traffic, and everything else basically came to a halt in the Philippines during the 12 rounds that Pacquiao was belting Cotto. It's hard to imagine an athlete in the U.S. ever being such a national hero that the entire country holds its breath when he competes. If Ali or Michael Jordan couldn't elicit that kind of reaction, who ever could?

• Bigmouth Floyd Mayweather Sr. is now accusing Pacquiao of using performance-enhancing drugs. (Never mind that Papa Mayweather offers no proof and that Pac Man has never failed a test for banned substances.) Where's a good case of laryngitis when we need one?

• According to *Forbes* magazine, Tiger Woods has become the first billion-dollar athlete in history. Why bring this up? Because the first time anyone ever spoke seriously about the idea of a billion-dollar athlete was way back in 1982, when Gerry Cooney was competing for the heavyweight title and his managers, Mike Jones and Dennis Rappaport, were predicting that "Gentleman Gerry" would achieve that distinction.

• Salton, makers of all those George Foreman grills, burger presses, sandwich makers, et al, should think about designing the Yuri Foreman Grill next. It would be for lighter fare like chicken nuggets and cocktail franks.

• City officials are erecting a statue of local hero Joey Giardello at an intersection in South Philly. While they're at it, they ought to honor his fellow Hall of Famer/Philadelphian, Jeff Chandler too.

• Why can't someone invent a logo paint that doesn't make the ring slippery?

• If Mark Breland had lived up to the hype that engulfed us after he won gold at the '84 Olympics ("The next Sugar Ray Leonard!"), he'd be commanding top dollar for his appearances at card shows these days. Instead, at a recent show in Virginia, his John Hancock was fetching a mere 10 bucks. Geez, if you're Breland, why bother risking a hand cramp for that kind of chump change?

PHOTO BY ISAAC BRECKENRIDGE/GETTY IMAGES

Big Floyd: Making unfounded accusations

• If the Mayans are correct, and the world is going to come to an end in 2012, here's hoping that we all go up in a fireball before having to sit through another pitty-pat punching competition at the London Olympics.

turf doesn't mean that you can't ask for an appetizer and a Maker's Mark on the rocks before the entrée arrives.

If the genie with Barbara Eden's body and Teddy Brenner's brain is listening, we'd like to request the following: David Haye vs. Vitali Klitschko (the better of the two Klitschko Brothers), Ricky Hatton vs. Cotto, Tomasz Adamek vs. Hopkins, Juan Manuel Marquez vs. Edwin Valero, Israel Vazquez-Rafael Marquez IV, and Paul Williams vs. Kelly Pavlik. That last gem has already been canceled *twice*, and it would be cruel to tease us so badly and never bring it to fruition.

6. One more world champion for J Russell Peltz: That, of course, would be his undefeated welterweight prospect, Mike Jones. Philadelphia, once a fight capital, needs another star attraction, and the 26-year-old Jones may be the best hope. And it would be a great human-interest story to see lion in winter Peltz, who promoted so many of the great bloodlettings in the city's history, get one more title belt on his resume before he retires.

You know, one of my wishes for 2010 was going to be that The Spectrum, the glorious arena in which so many wonderful Philly boxing moments took place, gets a reprieve from the wrecking ball. But by the end of November, permanent seats *and* folding chairs from the building were already being sold. (If someone can locate the exact folding chair that Superstar Billy Graham once whacked Bruno Sammartino over the head with, please put it aside for me.) Apparently, there's no stopping the march of progress. (Retail shops, a hotel, and a movie theater in its place. Ugh!) But if the genie can grant yet one more wish, it would be that those stores go out of business, the hotel and theater tank, and the ghost of Bennie Briscoe haunts the sacred ground forever.

Caesars Malice: One of the strangest, saddest, and most regrettable heavyweight title bouts in history was examined more closely than ever before in *Muhammad And Larry*, a documentary that recently aired on ESPN. It was part of the cable network's *30 For 30* series, which has studied subjects as varied as Wayne Gretzky's 1988 trade from the Edmonton Oilers to the Los Angeles Kings, the fall of the

PHOTO BY JEFF JULIAN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

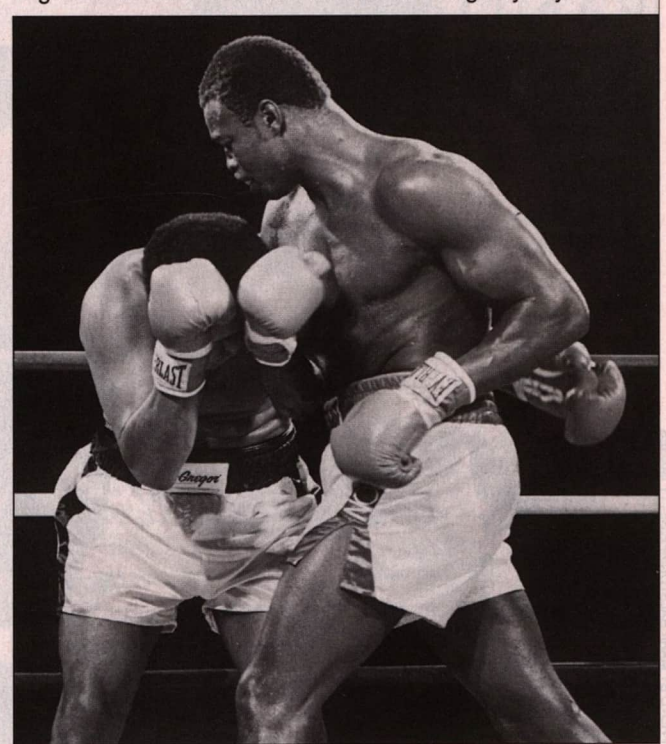
Can Jones bring Peltz another belt?

United States Football League, and the controversial career of sports handicapper Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder.

The show explored several angles of a prime Larry Holmes' 1980 stoppage of a 38-year-old Muhammad Ali at Las Vegas' Caesars Palace, but focused much attention on Ali's prefight use of Thyrolar, a drug he took to treat what was diagnosed (or perhaps misdiagnosed) as a case of hypothyroidism. Well, no sooner did the show air than Holmes sounded off, complaining that the program made it seem as though Ali's defeat was more the result of the drug robbing him of his energy than of Holmes' unstoppable jab and potent right hand robbing him of any chance to execute a Hail Mary game plan.

In this case, it seems that both sides have a good argument. Regardless of the fact that Ali was ancient and hadn't fought in two years, his performance that night against Holmes was so bad that something more than age and Holmes' skills had to be hampering him. Despite torturing his body in training camp and weighing less than he had in six years, "The Greatest" had no energy at all, wasn't sweating despite fighting under boiling hot ring lights in the desert, and simply couldn't let his hands go. Two years earlier, albeit against Leon Spinks, and a year later, vs. the unspectacular Trevor Berbick, Ali was barely a trace of his once-great self, but his offensive firepower was far better than it was in the Holmes bout.

And yet, the thyroid-pill controversy detracts from the big picture: A 38-year-old Ali, with two years of ring rust on him and a right cross that no longer carried enough snap to gain anyone's respect, wasn't going to beat a determined and sharp Holmes that night. Watching the action, one got the impression that "The Easton Assassin" could have completed the assassination any time he wanted. The whole unseemly scene was difficult to sit through and absolutely a night to forget—but kudos to ESPN for remembering anyway. ■



Holmes unhappy with new ESPN documentary

By Ivan Goldman

Tomato Cans Shouldn't Sell for $64.95

It would be impossible to screw up a match as splendid as Manny Pacquiao versus Miguel Cotto, but Top Rank promoter Bob Arum found a way to garbage it up along the edges. His co-feature of Julio Cesar Chavez versus one of his usual tomato cans emitted a stink so strong it made eyes burn via satellite. Was this any way to treat pay-per-view customers?

As more and more fans move up to high-def reception at home, satellite and cable providers tack about $10 on the already outrageous $54.95 ceiling. In these hard times, those prices make cheap undercards all the more exasperating.

Most of us in Arum's shoes would consider ourselves fortunate to promote both fighters in one of the most highly anticipated contests in years and might consider offering a co-feature that doesn't act like mustard and warm water on the senses. But Arum apparently saw trouble in Manny Pacquiao-Miguel Cotto. True, these were two superb welters who never come to dance, but you see, neither is Mexican, and Arum likes to think of himself as the foremost promoter of Mexican and Mexican fighters around. What to do?

What he did was misjudge his customers. Knowledgeable fans were going to purchase what promised to be the best welterweight match in years no matter what their ethnic background. He had every fight fan in the country wired and ready. Even *Time* magazine and *The New York Times* gave it a big buildup. For this closely watched undercard he had a perfect opportunity to showcase some of the many deserving fighters out there whose fame hasn't yet caught up with

PHOTO BY MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Goldman calls for an end to the Chavez charade

PHOTO BY MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

At least Foreman-Santos offered something

their abilities. Plenty are ethnic Mexicans, but alas, Chavez Junior is not among them.

Arum has been dishing out Chavez Junior for over six years now, inserting this handsome kid with his bejeweled name into a peculiar but clearly profitable pay-per-view sideline for suckers. The Chavez Junior novelty act replaced Top Rank's old Butterbean show, which was sometimes fun. This one is tedious and sadistic. You're supposed to enjoy yourself while a less than enthusiastic performer pounds out a lifeless victory over a hapless stiff with a blown-up record.

Troy Rowland, 25-3-1 (7), was perfect for the part. First and foremost, he couldn't punch, removing the possibility of disaster. And though he would try to win, he was also willing to take a beating. Promoters grow guys like him the same way farmers raise a private stock of lambs for special customers. Rowland had been carefully concealed in Michigan and Indiana, never venturing beyond their borders until he was ready for slaughter in Las Vegas.

Junior, who will be 24 in February, is now 41-0-1 (30) and better protected than our missile silos. He's never fought anyone of note, but is ranked the number-one super welterweight in the world by the Mexico City-based WBC, ranked above, for example, Paul Williams and Kermit Cintron. When Arum and the WBC kept their little Chavez scam on a small scale it was like a two-bit three-card monte game—not really worth busting. But this time the game was perpetrated on a truly national audience.

HBO, by failing to reject this rancid, rapacious repository of repugnant refuse, left a solid clue that something is rotten at the number one-selling premium network. If this is how HBO responds to the challenge of Showtime's "Super Six" tournament, its kingly position on the ratings mountain could be in serious jeopardy. Serving us Chavez-Rowland with our Cotto-Pacquiao was like garnishing a choice porterhouse with last month's fish guts.

The first televised fight, Yuri Foreman over Daniel Santos, was no barn-burner, but still a decent super welter contest. Foreman rose to the occasion while Santos fought like a man who was willing to kayo his opponent if he'd only stand still; otherwise forget it.

As for the main event, we're fortunate to live in a time when we can see the great Pacquiao at the top of his game against a worthy opponent like Cotto. Among my father's fondest sports memories was watching Babe Ruth sock one into the seats at Chicago's Comiskey Park. Well, we just got to see "Pac-Man" hit one out of the park.

24/7 Melodrama: HBO's *24/7* is mostly fun to watch, but whenever the camera focused on Pacquiao functionary Michael Koncz, the scene was so over-dramatized I half-expected to hear one of those old silent movie organs that played ominously while the villain twirled his mustache.

HBO producers discovered rivalries on Team Pacquiao because Manny has a hard time saying "no" to anybody. Instead of being taken off the burner, disputes in his camp keep simmering. A few years ago he even had contracts with two promoters at once, forcing Golden Boy and Top Rank to duke it out with lawyers. Pacquiao tends to agree

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Pacquiao can't say "no" to anyone

with the last person he spoke to. If he ever achieves his goal of holding office in the Philippines, he'll need to apply some of his inside-the-ring toughness to his political life.

More Plaster Disaster: Arum is trying to create demand for a rematch between Cotto and the disgraced Antonio Margarito, who's also in his stable. It's the "fight everyone would want to see," contended Arum. Meanwhile, additional incriminating information about Margarito and his loaded gloves has been leaking to the media.

HBO showed a photograph of Margarito after his July 2008 victory over Cotto in Las Vegas that reveals a suspicious pink mark on his wraps. California authorities own a similar photo, also taken immediately after the fight. Deputy Attorney General Karen Chappelle says the photograph shows a discolored section in the wrap on his left hand that lines up exactly with the spot where California inspectors removed a discolored plaster insert from Margarito's wraps before he was stopped by Shane Mosley in January.

Margarito's co-manager Sergio Diaz denies the photo proves cheating and said the discolored section probably came from dye inside Margarito's gloves. Dean Lohuis, a now-retired California inspector who worked the fight, said the inserts were discolored and "had been around several times before. I'm convinced it was there against Miguel."

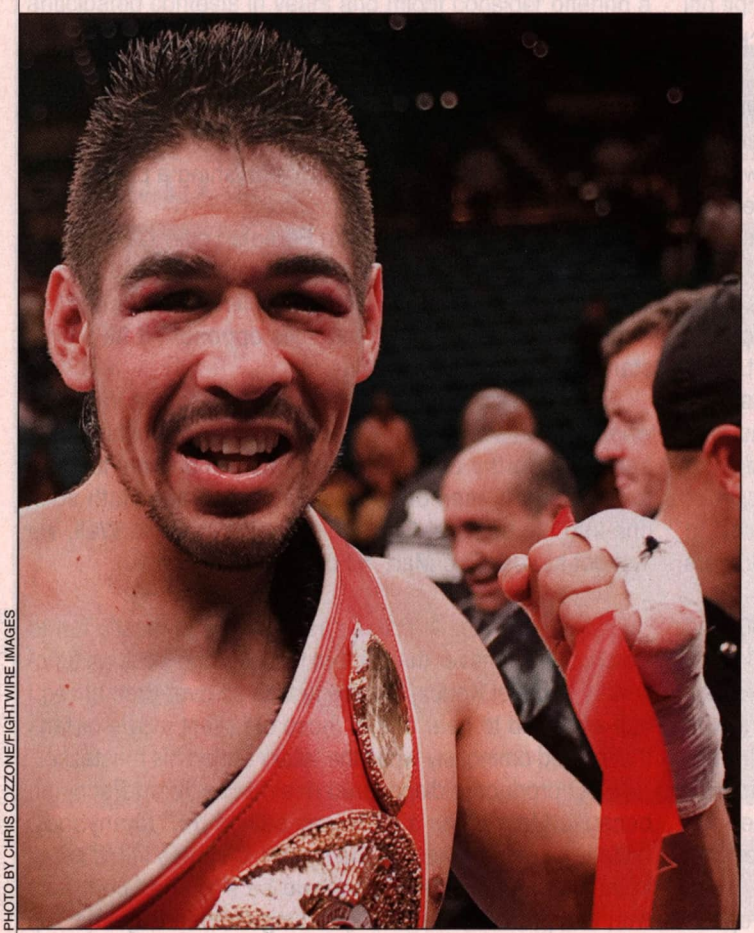


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

More incriminating evidence against Margarito

Chappelle told me she didn't consider pressing criminal charges against Margarito or his trainer Javier Capetillo because "we managed to stop it before it started. If we'd caught it after the fight, it would have been different." She also pointed out that she works in the licensing division, not the criminal division. Amazingly, Margarito's California purse wasn't withheld, so authorities didn't even try to exact a fine when they suspended him.

After reviewing the photo Chappelle referred to, Cotto told *The Los Angeles Times* that Margarito should be suspended for life.

Dawson-Johnson Reality: Hearing the HBO team describe Chad Dawson hammering out a not terribly exciting victory over Glen Johnson in a rematch that never should have happened was like listening to a delusional grandmother telling us how cute her homely grandkid is. The co-feature of Alfredo Angulo versus brave, hapless club fighter Joe Yorgey was less like a prizefight and more like assault and battery.

Magoo Lite: At one point the overwhelmed Yorgey turned his back and Angullo hit him on the back of the head. Talk to 10 referees about the prop-

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Callas did a good job of doing nothing

er way to handle this situation and you could get 10 answers. But what referee Johnny Callas did in Hartford, Connecticut was absolutely wrong: nothing. The referee should warn both fighters. You can't turn your back and you can't rabbit punch.

Home Box Office: I found plenty of fault with HBO this month, so I'd also like to point out that when the bell rang for Pacquiao-Cotto we got the terrific camera work and analysis we've come to expect from a network that does plenty right too. Now if we could just bring down some of those pay-per-view prices . . .

Good News In Camouflage: You say you're bummed out because some manager told a website that negotiations have broken down and a contest you were looking forward to won't happen after all? Well take heart, because here's a translation of what the handler really said: *This fight is definitely on, but we're trying to squeeze a few more dollars out of the deal, which is why we called a dot.com to announce that we're walking away, while actually we're setting up camp and lining up sparring partners for a done deal.*

Ruiz Again: We all knew this day would come. Grapple-monger John Ruiz is once more a mandatory challenger, this time for the belt David Haye lifted off Nicolay Valuev. What is it with Ruiz? Doesn't this guy ever check out the tapes of his fights? Listen closely and you can hear the cameramen snoring.

Besides which, how could he be a mandatory challenger in anything except maybe Greco-Roman wrestling? He's won only three of his last seven contests. He lost to Valuev (twice) and Ruslan Chagev and was thoroughly dismantled by old man James Toney (later changed to no-decision after Toney tested positive for a horse steroid). And those three victories? They were over Adnan Serin, 19-11-1 (7), Jameel McLine, 39-10 (23), and Otis Tisdale, 25-23-1 (15). If they ran baseball like this, some behind-the-scenes slimeball might have ignored the Yankees' record and maneuvered Tampa Bay into the World Series instead.

We all know the heavyweight division isn't in great shape these days. Another Ruiz contest on national TV might push it off the cliff. It could end up splattered at the bottom of the canyon like Wil E. Coyote. ■

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ruiz shows off one of his best moves

[Camera Clicks]

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOWTIME

Now this is a ring-walk get-up that we can get behind—not because Joseph "King Kong" Agbeko's gorilla mask is particularly cool or anything, but because he convinced a hot blonde to dress as Fay Wray and accompany him. Can we please convince a top fighter to nickname himself Jabba The Hut (cough, cough, Chris Arreola, cough), just so he can come to the ring with a chick dressed like Princess Leia in a bikini?

PHOTO BY JOHN PARRA/WIREIMAGE

No, this photo was not taken at the press conference where Evander Holyfield announced his intention to drop down to the new mini-mini-mini-strawweight division. Holyfield and Verne "Mini-Me" Troyer met up at the 13th annual Best Buddies Miami Gala in November, benefiting the non-profit Best Buddies organization, which helps people with developmental disabilities. Meanwhile, one thing is now clear about Holyfield: Between this photo and his fight last year against Nicolay Valuev, "The Real Deal" doesn't know how to pick on someone his own size.

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIMM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

The world wants to see "Klitschko meets Klitschko"; instead we have to settle for "Klitschko meets Becker," a charity soccer match pitting a team captained by Wladimir Klitschko against a team captained by retired German tennis star Boris Becker. From the looks of things, Klitschko is having more fun kicking this soccer ball than any boxing fan has had watching his last four fights.

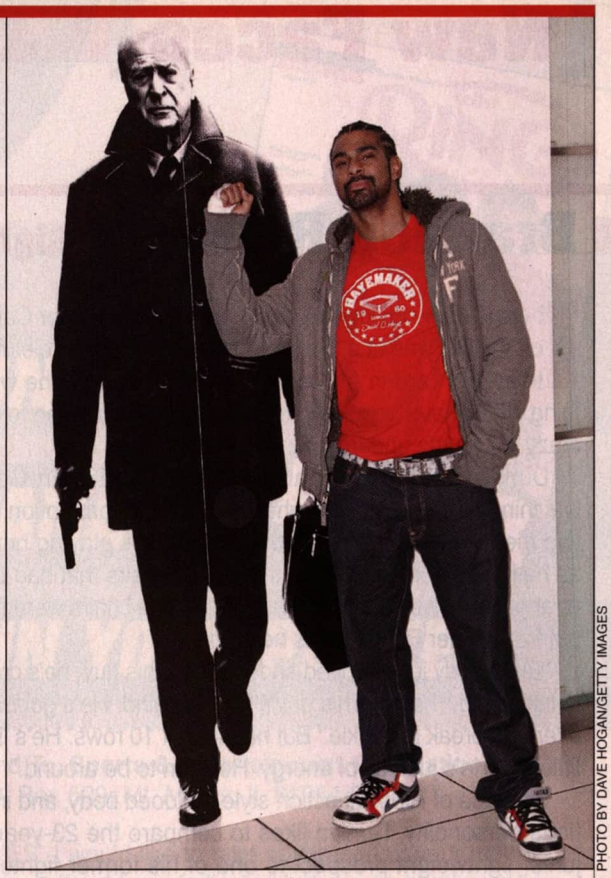


PHOTO BY DAVE HOGAN/GETTY IMAGES

What is it about David Haye picking fights with guys who are about a foot taller than he is? He got past Nicolay Valuev, and we suspect he could take 76-year-old Michael Caine also. Let's just hope he doesn't start taunting Caine with bloody photos of the septuagenarian actor's severed head.

PHOTO BY ZACH HILL/PHILADELPHIA FLYERS

If you ever find yourself in Philadelphia and challenging someone to a fight, you're looking at numbers one, two, and three on the list of guys who you don't want that someone to be. Ring readers know all about why you don't want to tangle with Joe Frazier or Bernard Hopkins, and the guy in between them is Dave Schultz, a member of the notorious "Broadstreet Bullies" crew from the 1970s era Flyers.

By Don Stewart

Brandon Rios Junior Lightweight

It was Thanksgiving Day 2005, and fight manager Cameron Dunkin was at a monotonous weigh-in for a Telefutura-televised card in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The whole thing would have been long forgotten, had it not been for that crazy kid on the undercard.

Dunkin was standing alongside trainer Robert Garcia watching the proceedings when he heard a commotion. The two men turned and watched Brandon Rios playing hurdler as he jumped onto and over the plastic chairs that had been arranged in rows. The floor was slick, so the chairs were flying out from under Rios' feet as he leapt.

"Everybody just stopped and watched this guy; he's crazy," Dunkin said. "I said, 'This guy's lost his mind. He's gonna fall over and break his ankle.' But he made it 10 rows. He's like a little kid. He's just full of energy. He's fun to be around."

Because of Rios' all-action style, tattooed body, and infectious personality, Dunkin likes to compare the 23-year-old junior lightweight prospect to one of his former fighters—three-division former titlist Johnny Tapia. The similarities don't end there however.

Like Tapia, "Bam Bam" has led a life away from the gym that has often been just as chaotic as the drama he craves on fight night. A series of arrests in his hometown of Garden City, Kansas, threatened to destroy his career before it really got started. The '04 U.S. Olympic alternate has stayed largely out of trouble for the past 18 months, however, thanks to added maturity, a watchful girlfriend, and avoiding Garden City as if it were a door-to-door salesman.

"Everybody lost faith in me," Rios said. "I didn't want that to happen, and it did. I'm trying to get that faith back."

Rios, 23-0-1 (17), has regained momentum with five-straight knockouts in the last year and has positioned himself as a potential breakout star for 2010 in the process. Dunkin plans to get Rios his first significant U.S. television exposure in early January, then a title shot before the year is out.

"I think at 130, he can really be special," Dunkin said. "He's gonna get a title fight. It's just a matter of time. That's why we've kept him so busy."

Staying busy works for Rios, a self-described "hyper kid" diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder in the ninth grade. He briefly took pills prescribed to calm him down, but the medication made him feel weak in the gym, so he stopped. The abundant energy makes Rios a fun fighter to watch and a fun guy to be around, but it has contributed to problems on the streets.

"I'm hyper," he said. "Sometimes I'm hitting people and I'm posing and I get in trouble. I've learned to control it. I look at everything differently now. But I'm still hyper."

In the *Garden City Telegram* archives, there are almost as many mentions of Rios in the police blotter as there are in the paper's sports section. Much of his problems stemmed from arguments with a former girlfriend who mothered one of his two children.

Rios was twice picked up in October '04 (shortly after his second pro bout), once for battery and once for driving with a suspended license. There was another arrest for battery and driving with a suspended license in December '04. In April '07, he was again caught driving with a suspended license.

Rios was jailed in March '08 on allegations of domestic battery and criminal damage. He also had an outstanding

(Continued on Page 108)

Pro Record

2004		
July 23	Raul Montes, Oxnard, CA	KO 3
Aug. 27	Abraham Verdugo, Phoenix, AZ	KO 2
2005		
Jan. 28	Ricky Ponce, Oxnard	KO 1
June 3	Gerardo Robles, Oxnard	KO 3
June 18	Ramon Flores, Maywood, CA	KO 1
July 15	Jamie Alvarado, Chicago, IL	KO 1
Sept. 30	Angel Eduardo Mata, Commerce, CA	W 6
Nov. 25	Mike Pare, Bernalillo, NM	W 4
2006		
Jan. 20	Joel Ortega, Maywood	KO 5
March 3	Freddy Castro, Maywood	KO 3
May 5	Juan Alfonso Figueroa, Maywood	KO 6
Sept. 8	Wayne Fletcher, Dallas, TX	KO 3
Oct. 13	Elias Lopez, Nogales, AZ	W 6
Dec. 22	Humberto Tapia, Cicero, IL	W 8
2007		
May 25	Carlos Madrid, Albuquerque, NM	W 6
2008		
March 14	Alvin Brown, Cicero	KO 2
May 17	Ricardo Dominguez, Mexico	W 10
July 25	Sandro Marcos, Las Vegas, NV	KO 2
Oct. 3	Manuel Perez, Denver, CO	D 10
Dec. 19	Carlos Guevara, Denver	KO 5
2009		
May 16	Oscar Meza, Primm, NV	KO 5
Sept. 12	Daniel Valenzuela, Mexico	KO 2
Oct. 17	Manuel Perez, Corpus Christi, TX	KO 7
Nov. 6	Lorenzo Estrada, Garden City, KS	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
23	23	0	1	17

PHOTO BY JOHN BOOZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

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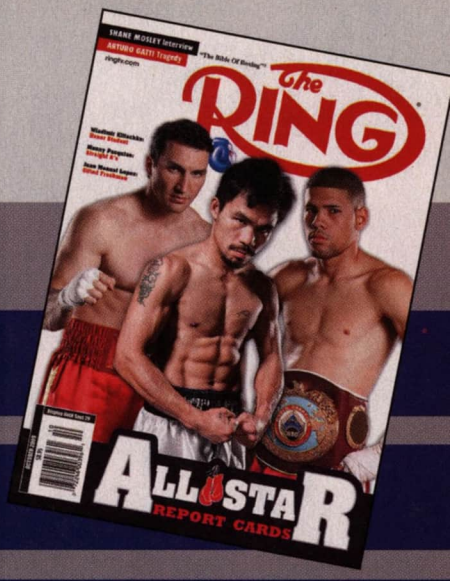

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PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

MANNY PACQUIAO

The Roots Of His Legend And The Secret Of His Success

By Nigel Collins

It was a sunny June morning in 2002 and the Memphis International Airport was busier than usual. The night before heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis had knocked out Mike Tyson in a fight that was, at the time, the highest grossing pay-per-view event in history.

As long lines of fans and media members shuffled slowly toward the departure gates, a slender boyish-looking man sat alone, a tiny suitcase at his feet, unrecognized by the crush of travelers. He too had fought the previous evening, savagely knocking out Jorge Eliecer Julio on the undercard, but Manny Pacquiao remained anonymous among the rush of humanity, just another guy waiting for a plane.

Flash forward to the early hours of November 15, 2009, as a gathering of approximately 5,000 revelers at the Mandalay Bay Event Center waited patiently for their hero to arrive. And when Pacquiao bounded onto the stage and launched into an ass-kicking version of "La Bamba," the crowd went bananas.

If it wasn't for the bandage wrapped around his head, partially hidden by the small fedora he wore at a rakish angle, you wouldn't

have known that just a few hours earlier Pacquiao had engaged in a brutal prize-fight with Miguel Cotto. The bruises under his eye had almost disappeared. Maybe the lights and makeup had something to do with it.

This wasn't Rinty Monaghan belting out "Danny Boy" in the ring after a fight. It was a full-blown production, complete with flashing lights, a crackerjack band, and dancing girls.

The juxtaposition of the evening's two events was deliciously surreal. As promised, Pacquiao sang eight songs, some in Tagalog and some in English—"So everybody can understand"—ranging from up-tempo rockers to the schmaltzy ballads Filipinos adore.

When he segued into "Sometimes When We Touch," the Dan Hill tune he sang on the *Jimmy Kimmel Live* a few weeks before the fight, the rapturous squeals from the female members of the audience almost drowned out the band.

Boxing's latest savior was celebrating his 50th victory in his own unique manner—and if he didn't sing anywhere near as well as he fights, nobody cared. They just wanted to be part of the incredible thrill ride that is Manny Pacquiao, a ride that has taken him from abject poverty in an Asian backwater to the cover of *Time* magazine and the bright lights of Las Vegas.

Who could have imagined, on that long ago Sunday morning in Memphis, that such a thing was possible? Maybe not even Manny dared to dream so spectacularly.

Today he is the centerpiece of a growing economic and political empire, an international personality whose life and exploits have eclipsed the sports page and become the stuff of legend.

Even for the Cotto fight, seen by many as his most difficult challenge to date, Pacquiao's business obligations meant a helter-skelter training camp of barely eight weeks. Nonetheless, he was in magnificent physical condition and seemed as full of energy in the final round as he was in the first.

By the time Pacquiao leapt forward and landed his final two punches of the night, referee Kenny Bayless was looking for the opportunity to stop the fight. When Pacquiao gave it to him, poor Cotto was mercifully lowered from the cross, and the Manny Pacquiao bandwagon rolled on.

As improbable as it all seemed seven years ago in Memphis, it's now possible to look back at what's happened. See how all the pieces of this man and the history of his people dovetailed together to create the international phenomenon he has become.

Pacquiao catches Cotto on the way in with a right to the head during the early going of their welterweight bout at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. The naturally larger Cotto provided Pacquiao with stiff competition the first half of the fight, but was eventually battered into a bloody TKO defeat.

Once considered just a left-handed power puncher, Pacquiao has vastly improved his skills under trainer Freddie Roach to the point that his right hand is now almost as lethal as his left.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Cotto struggles to regain his feet after being knocked down with a crushing left to the jaw in the fourth round. Although the Puerto Rican gamely beat the count and continued to give his all, he gradually faded under Pacquiao's relentless assault.

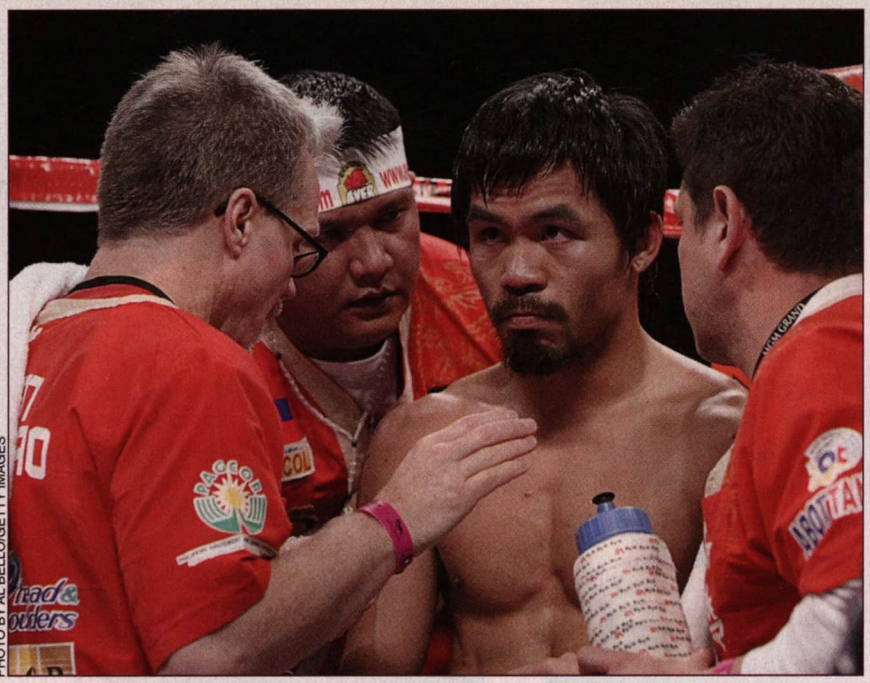


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Freddie Roach gives Pacquiao some advice between rounds. "Manny fought Cotto's fight too much in the beginning," said the trainer. "He stayed on the ropes too long. But Manny's speed was too much. Manny broke him down, and when Cotto started backing up, I knew the fight was over."

Of course, none of the incredible fame and fortune would have been possible if Pacquiao weren't a great fighter. That's the foundation of everything. But it should not be forgotten that he comes from ancient warrior stock. This is something that is often overlooked by contemporary observers, who forget that when Ferdinand Magellan took on Filipino chief Lapu-Lapu in the Battle of Mactan, it was the Portuguese explorer who ended up dead, riddled with poisonous arrows.

Centuries of oppression under the thumb of foreign invaders and corrupt leaders have not taken away the fighting spirit of the Filipino people. It has instead been sharpened by the kind of desperation that leads to a what-have-we-got-to-lose mentality. And that's exactly the mindset Pacquiao needs to fight with the reckless abandon that has carried him to unprecedented success.

Cotto Clobbered

The loyalties of the approximately 16,200 fans crammed into the MGM Grand Garden Arena seemed equally divided between Miguel Cotto and Manny Pacquiao. But the Puerto Ricans shouted louder that the Filipinos, especially during the first couple of rounds when it appeared Cotto had an excellent chance of winning.

But after Pacquiao scored the first knockdown of the fight, in the third round, Cotto's fans grew progressively quieter. And by time the ultimately on-sided fight entered its final stage, the only voices heard were those of Pacquiao's followers roaring him on to yet another spectacular victory.

The opening round was especially encouraging for Cotto as he connected early with hurtful-looking jabs that ploughed into Pacquiao's face with alarming ease. Later, Pacquiao said he "needed time to test (Cotto's) power."

He had plenty of opportunity to do just that in the second round, when they engaged in a number of high-energy exchanges during three minutes of fury that will have to be part of the discussion when Round of the Year honors are selected.

In the third, Cotto, 145, was suddenly sent sprawling to the floor by a right hand that landed just below his left ear. He scrambled up and seemed okay, but when Pacquiao, 144, knocked him down again in the fourth with a vicious left uppercut, Cotto was clearly hurt.

There was more enthralling give-and-take in the fifth; Cotto wobbled at one point, but steadied himself and fought back. By then, Pacquiao had found his fighting rhythm and was utilizing his dazzling footwork to find the correct angle from which to attack. He unleashed one rapid-fire volley of punches after another, as his fists raked Cotto's face like bursts of machine gun fire.

"I didn't know from where the punches were coming," Cotto said when his ordeal was finally over. "Manny Pacquiao is one of the best boxers I ever fought."

Another right hurt Cotto in the sixth, by which time the Puerto Rican's face looked like somebody had been whacking it with a crowbar. His features were hideously bruised and swollen, blood flowed from his nose and a cut above his left eye.

Cotto, 34-2 (27), spend much of the second half of the fight in retreat, using his legs to avoid, or at least minimize, the amount of punishment he absorbed.

Referee Kenny Bayless (USA) had been consulting with the ringside physician for a number of rounds, and had been advised to stop the rout at the first opportunity. And after another hard combination from Pacquiao landed in the 12th, the fight was mercifully halted 55 seconds into the round.

Moments later, as Pacquiao celebrated, the sellout crowd began to chant: "We want Floyd! We want Floyd!"

They may very well get what they want, but first Pacquiao, 50-3-2 (38), will return to the Philippines for the traditional postfight victory parade through downtown Manila and then plunge back into the crazy whirlwind of activity that is the life of the best fighter in the world.

—N. C.

True, he's many years and many millions of dollars away from his boyhood days hustling cigarettes on the street. But those formative years, the years of not knowing for sure where the next meal was coming from, molded the boy who became the man who now has the boxing world in the palm of his hands.

Manny's sunny disposition and humble demeanor, which contrast so vividly with his merciless ferocity inside the ring, is also a product of his roots. Among Filipinos, humility and hospitality are the most admired traits, and when Pacquiao told reporters at the postfight press conference that he thought of himself as an "ordinary fighter" he wasn't kidding.

Sure, he knows he's much more than that. But it took a blatant prod from trainer Freddie Roach for him to admit as much, and even then Manny acquiesced in a way that paid homage to the teacher not the student.

"You're not ordinary," said Roach,

"Sorry, Master," Pacquiao replied, flashing a grin of Cheshire Cat proportions.

Manny is more than happy to leave the talking to Roach, especially when it comes to prefight trash talk. Many of his opponents have found him as endearing as the rest of us do—before the bell rang anyway. But it's doubtful that will be the case if the Pacquiao-Floyd Mayweather fight is made. In that event, Master Roach will undoubtedly have his hands full with the bellicose Mayweather clan.

There seems to be an unseen force at work, pulling boxing unalterably toward the eventuality of a Pacquiao-Mayweather showdown. But before we plunge headlong into the future, let's pause briefly and try to absorb everything that the Pacquiao juggernaut has wrought to date.

With each victory Pacquiao's legend grows, but the massacre of Cotto was an outcome that many critics had considered highly unlikely.

"Wait until Pacquiao gets hit by a full-fledged 147-pounder," said the nonbelievers. "The first time Cotto nails him with his left hook it will be over."

Well, Pacquiao did get hit quite a bit in the early rounds, and Cotto's frightening left hook found the mark more than once. But Manny just blinked and continued to do his thing. Later, he revealed to ESPN's Brian Kenny that Cotto's punches had indeed hurt, but that he "pretended" that they had not.

That Pacquiao is eager to share his success with his people, while remaining one of them, is an essential ingredient in the mix that creates the magic. When he says he wants to put on a good fight to "make the people happy," it sets him apart from so many sporting prima don-

Cotto suffered grotesque facial damage

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Pacquiao's expression shows a mixture of joy and relief as referee Kenny Bayless rescues Cotto 55 seconds into the final round to spare the loser additional punishment. Many observers felt the fight should have been stopped earlier.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

nas, who typically have more selfish motives behind their striving.

The commercial spin-offs from Pacquiao's Hall of Fame boxing career now consume the majority of his time and energy. Dire predictions of being derailed by his lifestyle and/or outside interests have been a staple of media coverage since the beginning of his rise to prominence.

His singing career is a relatively small part of his extracurricular activities. Check out the number of Pacquiao commercials on YouTube. The variety of products he endorses seem endless, Nike, San Miguel Beer, McDonald's, Talk 'N Text, Head and Shoulders dandruff shampoo, Magnolia dairy products—you name it, Manny has probably plugged it. Then there are the movies.

Pacquiao has appeared in seven movies since 2000, starting in secondary roles and graduating to leading man in 2005's *Lisensyadond Kamao*, in which he played a boxer whose mother and sister are kidnapped by thugs while he's training for the big fight. In 2008's *Anak ng Kumander*, Manny was a rebel hiding out in the mountains with a band of men, wreaking havoc on the corrupt officials who oppressed the people.

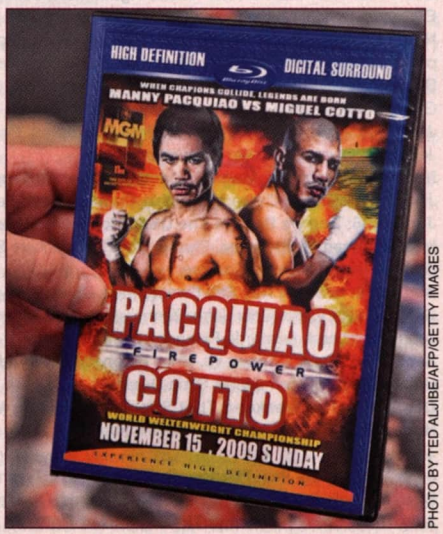
There is a cornball charm to these low-budget Filipino productions, and Pacquiao just might have hit his stride with his latest effort, *Wapakman.* In this flick, he's a superhero, complete with a cheesy red costume and numerous superpowers.

While one must suspend all disbelief in order to enjoy such guilty pleasures, in the boxing ring the critics have retreated, their skepticism replaced by incredulity.

And if the bean counters insist a fighter is to be measured by the amount of money he generates, the extraordinary pay-per-view buy rate for the Cotto fight puts Pacquiao at the elite level. According to HBO, the fight sold approximately 1.25 million pay-per-views, roughly 200,000 more than the Mayweather-Juan Manuel Marquez fight in September. Moreover, the live gate was $8.84-million, which also topped Mayweather-Marquez by around $2-million.

Many people who care about him wish that Pacquiao would slow down, stop spreading himself so thin, and abandon his political aspirations. But that's not about to happen, not yet anyway. Right now, the Pac-Man Express is going so fast, he couldn't get off if he wanted.

Whether or not the next stop is Floyd Mayweather, Pacquiao's destiny is rushing full speed into the unknown—all we can do is hold on tight and enjoy the trip. ■



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Fans in the Philippines erupt in a frenzy of joy as Pacquiao stops Cotto half-a-world away in Las Vegas. Less that 24-hours later, pirated DVDs of the fight were being sold by the thousands on the streets of Manila (inset).

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A LOOK AHEAD TO 2010

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By William Dettloff

The New York Times led the way, as they do a lot of the time, even now. This time it wasn't a good thing. "With Pacquiao-Cotto, Boxing Is Ready For A Rebirth, Again," a headline observed the day before Manny Pacquiao's bloody and spectacular win over Miguel Cotto in Las Vegas.

The Manny Pacquiao-Miguel Cotto fight highlighted what was a rebound year for boxing in 2009. While the mainstream sports media kept up its tired cliché that boxing is dying, Pacquiao-Cotto attracted 1.25 million pay-per-view buys.

It could be read as snarky, which would put it in line with most general media stories about boxing, but also as familiar as a tired nursery school song, the same pabulum that put us all to sleep the last time there was a "fight to save boxing." Remember? Floyd Mayweather W 12 Oscar De La Hoya. How could you forget?

You almost can't blame the general sports and other media whizzes for missing the boat time and again when it comes to our little business. It must be that boxing is so small that they can't see how big it is, or so dead they can't see the blood pumping through its veins. It recalls the old Henny Youngman joke: A doctor gave a man six months to live. The man couldn't pay his bill, so the doctor gave him another six months.

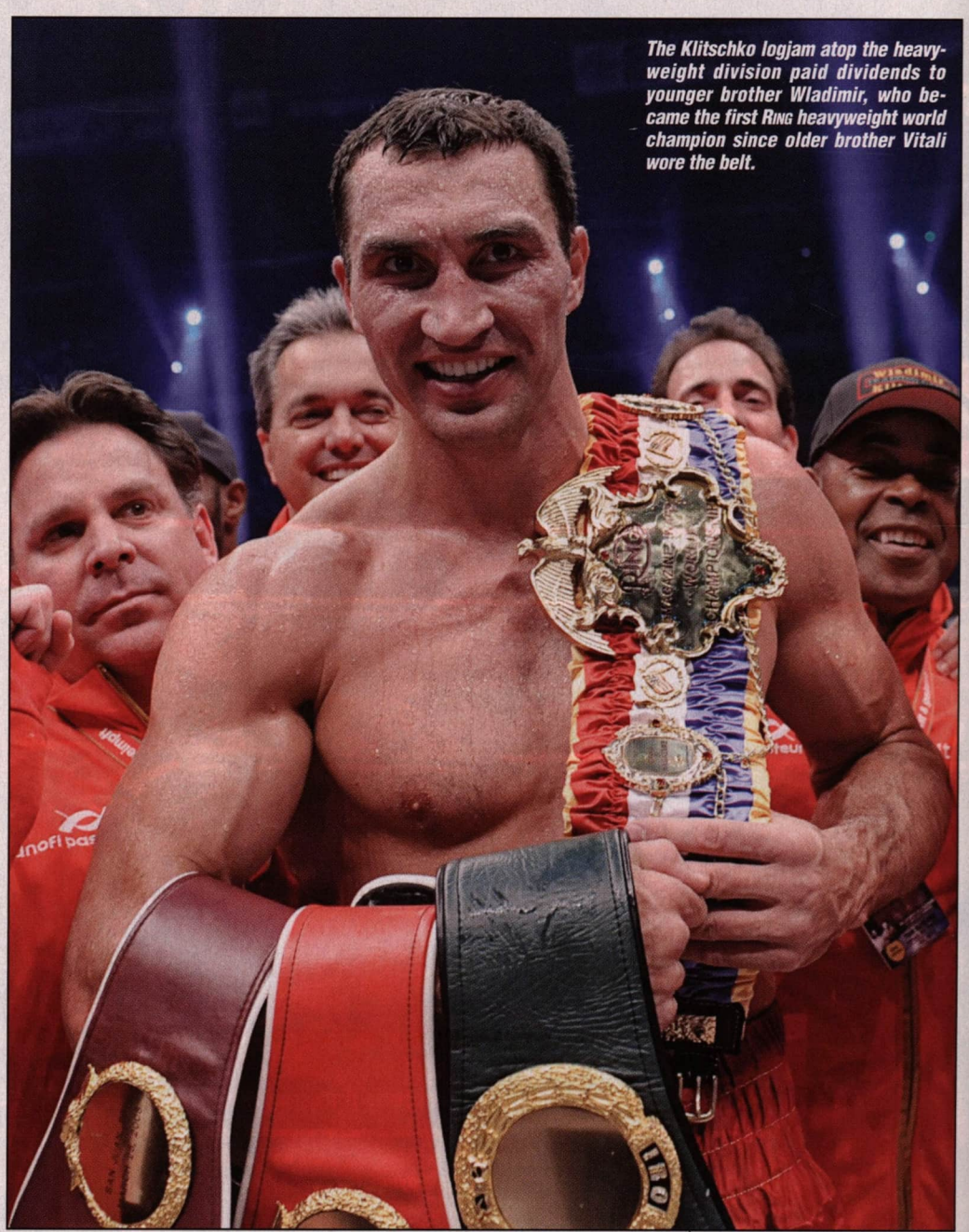
They keep saying the old game is dead. And whenever a fight reaches across oceans and deserts and mountain ranges, when one stretches like the very big ones do sometimes and is felt in Hoboken brownstones as much as in Manila slums or in the ghettos of El Salvador or Mexico City or in smoky London flats, they call it the death rattle, and then act surprised when it happens again next time. Over and over, there's been a next time. And still they think there won't be a next time. Or at least they pretend to.

As we already said, though, you can't blame them. On these very pages last year, we looked ahead to 2009 with a hope borne of not a little wishful thinking and the sense that since things couldn't get much worse; they would have to get better. The same pessimism that pervaded every other business in a gasping world economy got a hold of us too, even if we were just reporting the facts. You remember. The bad news came in waves, one downer after the other.

ESPN2 cancelled its long-running summer staple, *Wednesday Night Fights*. That hurt, but you could take it, since the fights typically were about as compelling as ones you'd see on *Real Housewives of Orange County* or *Wife Swap*. But then Telefutura pulled the plug on *Solo Boxeo*, despite its high ratings and frequently excellent matchups. It didn't end there.

Ratings for fights on HBO were in the gutter. Big pay-per-view cards like the ones that featured Bernard Hopkins' historic win over Kelly Pavlik and Joe Calzaghe's over Roy Jones disappointed. These weren't unproved, unknown pugs fighting for a small piece of anonymous pie. They were boxing's biggest stars and they couldn't pull viewers away from this or that magic juicer or foot warmer on the Home Shopping network.

Something was seriously wrong. But the game rebounded in 2009 as it always does, and most of what went on portends good things for 2010. We'll get to those in a minute. Let's get the bad stuff out of the way first, because not everything went as well as we would have wanted it to in '09,



The Klitschko logjam atop the heavyweight division paid dividends to younger brother Wladimir, who became the first RING heavyweight world champion since older brother Vitali wore the belt.

and those things directly impact the forecast for 2010.

What Went Wrong: The Klitschko brothers continued their mammoth stranglehold on the heavyweight division. It's good if you're in Germany or the Ukraine, or if you don't mind knowing that the two best heavyweights in the world will never fight one another. Yes, we know Wladimir is the heavyweight champion. But we also know he'll never fight his top contender.

What It Means For 2010: Another year in which no one—at least in America—really cares who the heavyweight champ is. And that's not good for anyone.

What Went Wrong: *The Contender* reality show, which everyone hoped would help boxing ease back into the mainstream when it debuted on NBC in 2005, continued its humiliating tumble down the food chain of sports programming, finishing up season five, universally viewed as the most dismal yet, on the Versus network (fittingly, the season featured cruiserweights). We can only hope executive producer Jeff Wald lets it die a peaceful death.

What It Means For 2010: Not much. Most people had given up on the show already as evidenced by its dismal ratings. And hey, no boxing is better than bad boxing laced with forced sentimentality and dramatic contrivances.

What Went Wrong: Antonio Margarito tried to get away with loading his gloves against Shane Mosley. The good news is he got caught.

What It Means For 2010: Other than the couple of big fights Margarito will miss, not that much. It's not like welterweight is hurting for good fighters, and that the game did the right thing by revoking his license gave boxing a good public relations hit.

What Went Wrong: The aforementioned Versus network announced it was getting out of the boxing business almost entirely. This after airing a series of club fights promoted by Golden Boy. There are similar goings-on with channels in Great Britain.

What It Means For 2010: It's never a good thing when a cable channel says it's divorcing itself from boxing. In a business in which everyone copies everyone else, it scares off other channels considering giving boxing a try.

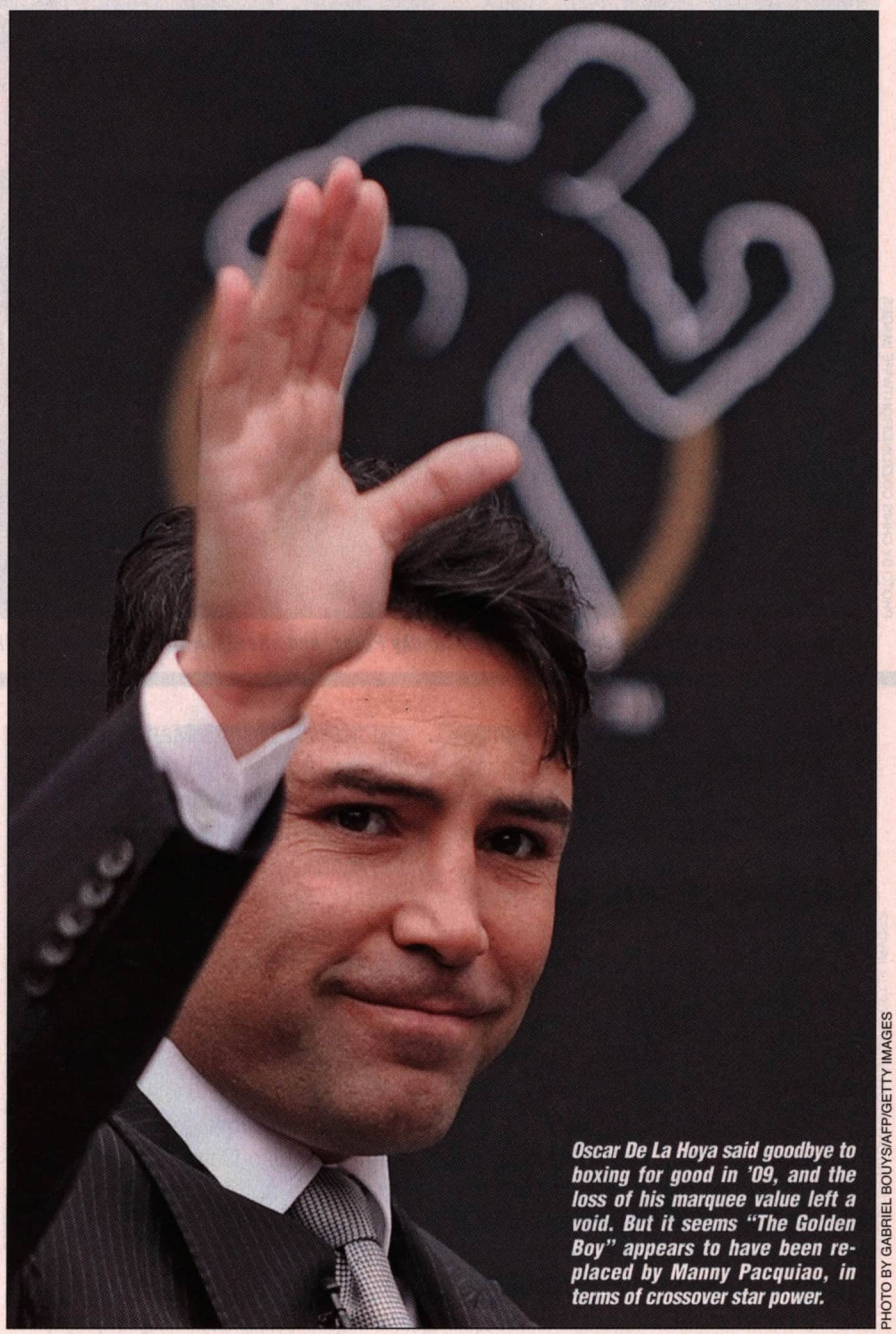
What Went Wrong: Kelly Pavlik fought just once and not especially well. All the excitement he generated with his wins over Jermain Taylor is long gone. Doesn't it seem like a long time ago when Bob Arum said Pavlik would be the guy to bring boxing all the way back?

What It Means For 2010: We won't know until we see Pavlik in the ring again with a real opponent. Maybe he's done. It would be better for everyone if he isn't.

What Went Wrong: Oscar De La Hoya retired from boxing.

What It Means For 2010: Nada. Zilch. See Manny Pacquiao.

What Went Wrong: The governing bodies fell all over one another creating new belts and championships at an unprecedented rate. There are more WBA interim and "regular" champions now than there are contenders. The WBC announced a new "Diamond belt" championship for catchweight fights, and the WBO has gotten into the act with "super" champions. (That last one may not be new, but really, who the hell knows anymore?)



Oscar De La Hoya said goodbye to boxing for good in '09, and the loss of his marquee value left a void. But it seems "The Golden Boy" appears to have been replaced by Manny Pacquiao, in terms of crossover star power.

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

10 FIGHTS WE'D LIKE TO SEE

Not one of the matchups we listed in this space last year happened in 2009, but there were so many good fights anyway we hardly noticed. Still, there's always room for improvement and no end to the number of good and interesting matches that could be made in 2010 if only someone would take our advice. Here are 10 of them (in no particular order):

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Joseph Agbeko deserves another shot against Yonnhy Perez, and after their first give-and-take tilt, not many would argue against that point.

What It Means For 2010: In the smaller picture and for the biggest fights, it doesn't mean much. The very biggest fights don't need any belts to help sell them. But longer term, it means a lot more. Not that we want or need their stinkin' approval, but mainstream sports media will never take boxing seriously so long as the administration of its ratings and championships makes the ranking of college football teams appear logical beyond approach.

Enough of that. There's probably more, but we're trying to keep this upbeat, which is much easier since the anti-depressants kicked in. So keep reading for what went right in 2009 and what it means for 2010.

What Went Right: Manny Pacquiao exploded. Against De La Hoya. Against Ricky Hatton. On *Jimmy Kimmel Live*! On the cover of the Asian edition of *Time* magazine. On HBO's *24/7*. And against Cotto, in a fight that garnered approximately 1.25 million pay-per-view buys, generating $70-million in revenue, making it the largest grossing fight of 2009.

What It Means For 2010: It means boxing doesn't need Oscar De La Hoya in the ring anymore (take that, Dana White). Pacquiao-Cotto drew 6,500 fans to the *weigh-in*, for cripes' sake, and a record number of news media requests. It was big. Very big.

What Went Right: Floyd Mayweather returned and did a million pay-per-view buys—against Juan Manuel Marquez! Think about that: two counterpunchers, one of them a blown up lightweight at the top of a typically poor undercard, and it still did those numbers. And on the same night as a UFC show (and that, White!). This proved one thing: Mayweather no longer needs a big name for a dance partner. He can carry a pay-per-view show almost entirely by himself.

What It Means For 2010: It's good for any sport when one of its stars and maybe its best practitioner is getting good work done.

What Went Right: Showtime put together a super middleweight tournament and it doesn't feel like a cheap HBO knock-off.

Edwin Valero-Humberto Soto

So many questions: Is Valero too fast and powerful? Is Soto too strong and technically sound? Will Valero's strange 1970s, retro-look creep Soto out? Will Sosa's oddly suggestive "Crafty Little Fox" moniker make Valero uncomfortable? Can you see the possibilities?

Librado Andrade-Sakio Bika

Because you can't hurt Andrade if you hit him on the head with a hatchet, and Bika has the hardest noggin this side of Kid Gavilan. Neither sees defense as anything but an annoyance and both could punch for 25 rounds if they had to. What else do you need?

Michael Katsidis-Ricky Hatton

It's been a long time since Hatton has drawn someone who doesn't know how to get out of the way of a punch; he's earned the right to tee off on a guy again. And Katsidis couldn't take a step backward if he were being chased by a colony of Africanized killer bees. By the end, the two would look like a bowl of soft-boiled eggs swimming in ketchup. Everyone wins.

Yonnhy Perez-Joseph Agbeko II

Their first fight wasn't Vazquez-Marquez only because neither guy bleeds and they both have good chins. But they wailed on one another like no one's business and there's no reason to think a rematch would be any different.

Ricardo Torres-Amir Khan

What do you like: Khan's shaky chin and big punch or Torres' shaky chin and big punch? These are two flawed, vulnerable powerpunchers who on any night could knock a world champion cold or get knocked cold by your husky aunt from Utica. A can't-miss slugfest.

David Haye-Tomasz Adamek

Okay, we stole this one from Adamek, who started calling out Haye around the time he tore apart the hulking remains of Andrew Golota in Poland. Haye is the dreaded smallish heavyweight, Adamek is a big cruiserweight, and their styles match up nicely. Could a meeting between them usher in a new age of heavyweights who don't block out the sun when they do their roadwork?

Celestino Caballero-Juan Manuel Lopez

Is there a more obvious fight at junior featherweight? Caballero is the alpha at 122 (as much as anyone who weighs 122 pounds can be an alpha) and JuanMa is his hopeful replacement. Guaranteed fireworks at 122.

Paul Williams-Kelly Pavlik

This was supposed to be done in December, but Pavlik's hand problems forced a cancellation. Provided that by the time you read this Williams has beaten Sergio Martinez and Pavlik has gotten by Miguel Espino, this is a must-have for 2010.

Timothy Bradley-Juan Diaz

Diaz may or may not have beaten Paulie Malignaggi in their rematch by the time you read this, and the same goes for Bradley and Lamont Peterson. Doesn't matter. Bradley and Diaz are two tireless, relentless volume punchers with good skills who would be in one another's face for as long as it lasted.

Tavoris Cloud-Adrian Diaconu

Cloud throws every punch like his opponent owes him money, and Diaconu backs up like Wladimir Klitschko throws caution to the wind. This is a punchout from the first bell until the moment when ringsiders have to duck for cover from all the flying teeth and sweat showers. Sign us up.

—W. D.

What It Means For 2010: Some very interesting fights at 168 pounds and maybe some pressure on HBO to get its act together and start consistently putting on good shows again. And not just on pay-per-view.

What Went Right: Pacquiao beat Cotto. Yes, Cotto-Mayweather would have been big too. And who knows, styles meaning what they do, maybe Cotto would have done better against Mayweather than Pacquiao will. But Pacquiao-Mayweather is bigger than Cotto-Mayweather. It just is.

What It Means For 2010: If they can convince Mayweather to do it (see: pay him enough), Mayweather-Pacquiao is the biggest fight in a very long time. It's huge.

PHOTO BY MITCH HADDAD/ABC/VIA GETTY IMAGES

Manny Pacquiao was everywhere in '09, including a singing performance on the **Jimmy Kimmel Live** *show. The Filipino dynamo ended the year by banging out Cotto and opened up the possibility for the richest fight in boxing history against Floyd Mayweather in 2010.*

What Went Right: David Haye beat Nicolay Valuev.

What It Means For 2010: Nothing against Valuev—we like a science experiment gone wrong as much as anybody. But where Valuev is mostly a curiosity, like a giant slug rolling around in your garden might be, Haye is an exciting, fairly dynamic guy with personality. How much he can do against heavyweights with more ability than Valuev remains to be seen, but any time you have a heavyweight loudmouth who can fight a little, it doesn't hurt.

That's all short-term stuff. The longer term success of this sport will always be determined by it stars and their ability to put butts in seats. Last year De La Hoya, Joe Calzaghe, and Margarito were among those we said would lead the surge. They're gone

WISH LIST FOR 2010

No preview like this would be complete without a wish list for the coming year. Here's ours:

• A heavyweight so interesting that we stop fantasizing about the Brothers Klitschko fighting one another.

• That more of the game's powerbrokers recognize how fun and interesting tournaments like Showtime's super middleweight tourney is and act accordingly.

• A fight between John Duddy and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. so that we can be done with one of them already.

• That by the time you read this, Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao have agreed to fight in the spring and that when the pay-per-view show is put together, the promoters recognize the opportunity before them and stack the card with top-notch fights. Too much? Okay. We'll settle for the fight being made.

• A union that can advocate for more camera time for round card girls. They have to eat too, you know. But not too much. No one likes a chubby round card girl.

• Another year at least on the outside looking in for Antonio Margarito and his trainer. Shame on them. Still.

• Another 30 years of good health for Bob Arum. He's a snake, but the man knows how to promote.

• Peace of mind and retirement for Jermain Taylor and, while we're at it, Evander Holyfield, James Toney, Andrew

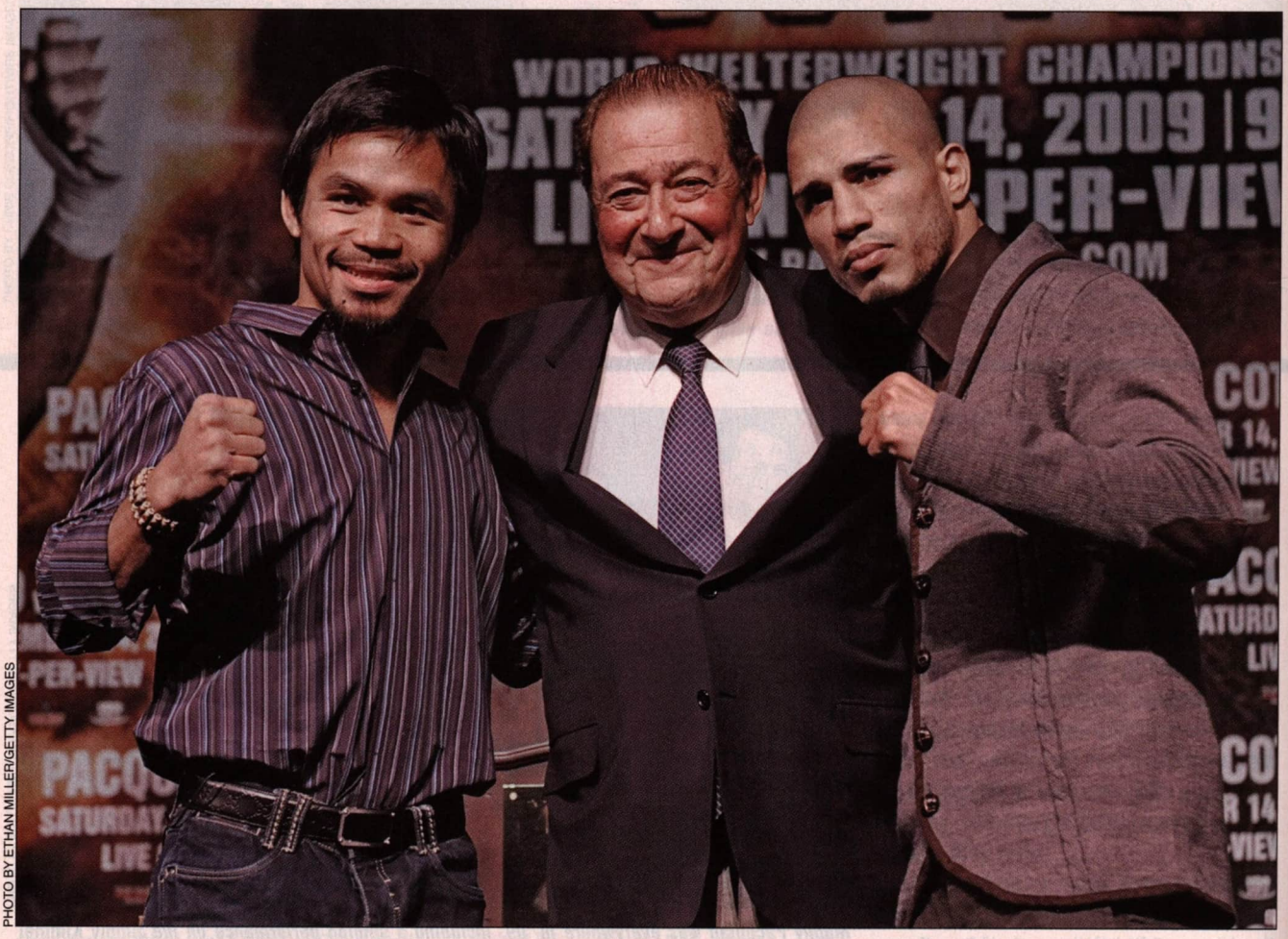


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Bob Arum could be a lot of things, but there is no doubting the Hall of Fame promoter's skill in putting together the best shows in boxing.

now, but more will take their place. Here are a few:

Tomasz Adamek: Who would have thought a Polish cruiserweight would turn Newark, New Jersey, into a boxing hotbed? Adamek is doing it and his recent move to heavyweight only makes things better. The guy can fight, he can punch, and he's got a real fan base.

David Haye: See our comments above. Haye might get crushed by either of the Klitschko brothers. Heck, we're not even certain he gets by John Ruiz, his alphabet mandatory. But he'll

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Hopefully we won't be seeing much more of this in 2010. Here's hoping for a full recovery for Z Gorres.

Golota, Randall Bailey, Shannon Briggs, Jonathan Reid, Christy Martin, and, yes, Miguel Cotto. He's done enough.

- A fair shake and respect for Paulie Malignaggi and Paul Spadafora and others like them who can't break an egg, but can box their asses off.
- Another contract extension for Larry Merchant.
- A new trainer for Harry Yorgey. One that can show him how to duck.
- As many fights against as many top guys as Paul Williams wants. Fearless fighters are rare and their courage and confidence should be rewarded.
- One more fight between Israel Vazquez and Rafael Marquez. And that's it. No more. Okay. Maybe one more after that. Five's a good number. But no more after that. Unless they really want to.
- Peace for the families of Arturo Gatti, Alexis Arguello, and Vernon Forrest.
- A budget for ESPN's *Friday Night Fights* series that's bigger than Ivan Calderon's monthly grocery bill.
- Full schedules for all the fighters whose promoters don't care whether or not the kid has a family to feed.
- No more of this silly "boxing is dead" tripe from lazy writers and other know-nothing talking heads. If this is what dead looks like, there's something going on in graveyards that we don't know about.
- Just one governing body press release that is less self-serving and transparent than one of Britney Spears' T-shirts. Just one. Is that too much to ask?
- A full recovery for Z Gorres and others like him.
- For the anonymous trainers out there waiting all their lives for Mike Tyson to walk through the door, the knowledge that they have done good work even if he never shows up.

—W. D.

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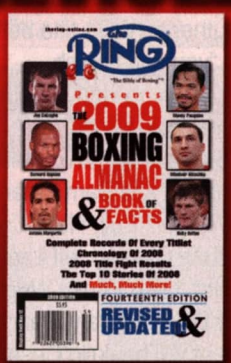

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make things fun at heavyweight, at least for a little while.

Paul Williams: Williams was here last year too, and while he didn't exactly set the sport afire in 2009, it wasn't for lack of trying. Any year that you beat up Winky Wright the way Williams did is a very good year.

Manny Pacquiao: For all the reasons we've already mentioned, and probably a lot more that we missed. Ditto for Floyd Mayweather. Together, they will break records.

Andre Berto: Whether or not he beats Shane Mosley in January, Berto is

PREDICTIONS FOR 2010

We didn't exactly hit it out of the park with last year's predictions (or hit it at all, frankly), but that won't stop us from trying again. Here's what's going to happen in 2010. Remember—you read it here first. These are a lock.

• Even Floyd Mayweather will concede that he's gone through all his material on previous episodes of *24/7* and will be filmed for the next one simply sitting in the middle of a big pile of money and staring at the camera. And he'll look all annoyed doing it.

• Despite sufficient evidence to the contrary, those who saw Arturo Gatti fight will continue to doubt that he killed himself.

• Paul Williams will make it to the pound-for-pound list and stay there a good long while.

• The chain store Target will announce plans to start carrying authentic WBA title belts, available in interim, regular, super, and "you gotta be sh_____' me" models. Unfortunately, they won't catch on with consumers on account of the market being saturated.

• The Brothers Klitschko will not fight one another. Let it go.

• You will not see Sam Peter in a big fight. Same with Sultan Ibragimov, O'Neill Bell, Nate Campbell, Jorge Barrios, Antonio Tarver, Joshua Clottey, Jeff Lacy, Zab Judah, and Allan Green.

• You won't see Winky Wright at all.

• Oscar De La Hoya will announce he's going to fight again. His opponent will be Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. There will be many press conferences.

• Carl Froch's girlfriend will awaken from the stupor she's been in for we don't know how long and realize that she can do better. Much better.

• The rematch between Chad Dawson and Tomasz Adamek will put Newark, New Jersey in the spotlight again, and this time it won't be as the American city in which you're most likely to get robbed and killed.

• Several fighters will die of head injuries. Everyone will shrug.

• The Bernard Hopkins-Roy Jones fight will happen. Oh, yes it will. You were waiting for us to make some sarcastic quip about it falling through. Not this time. It will happen. And you and seven other fight junkies will watch it on pay-per-view. At least seven.

• Rumors will abound that after the conclusion of Showtime's "Super Six" tournament, Joe Calzaghe will come out of retirement to face the winner. The rumors will be true.

• With his days mostly free after his loss to David Haye, Nicolay Valuev will work on his favorite hobby, which involves grabbing short blond girls and carrying them in one hand to the top of skyscrapers in and around Saint Petersburg, Russia.

• Rocky Juarez will get yet another alphabet title fight—his 117th—and he will lose every round except the last, when he comes close to stopping his opponent. Ronnie Shields' head will explode at ringside.

• Jermain Taylor will fight again. It will be hard to watch.

—W. D.

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER

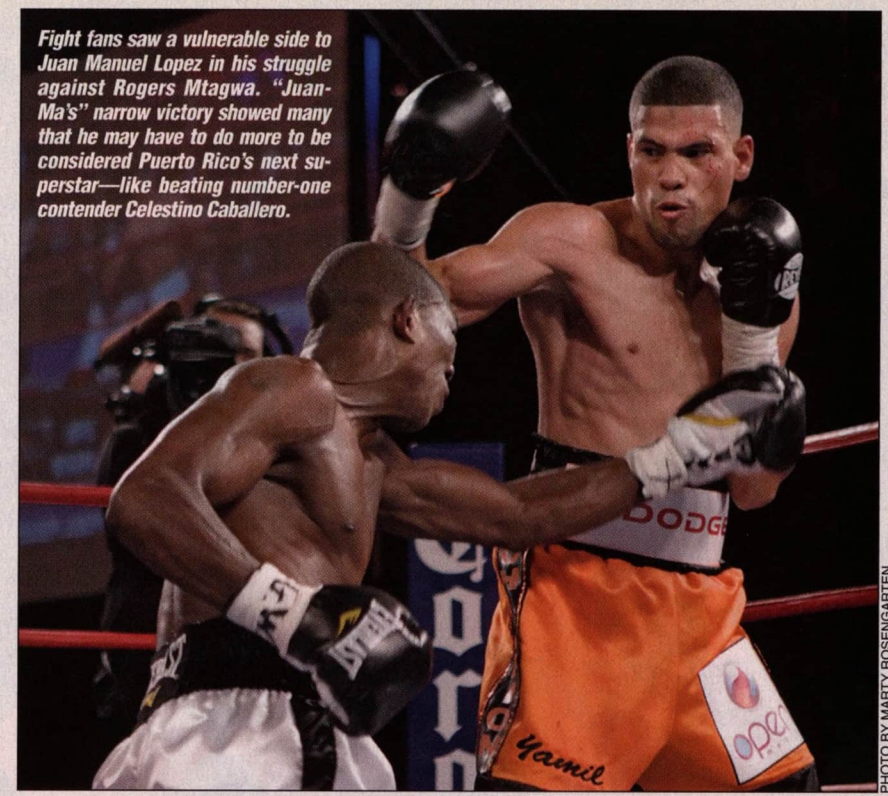
After whiffing in the prediction department for '09, let's count on a Chad Dawson-Tomasz Adamek rematch happening sometime in 2010, in Newark, New Jersey.

young enough, likable enough, and good enough to make people want to see him fight, and he's got the connections to make it happen. There's no reason this kid can't be one of boxing's very big stars down the road.

Juan Manuel Lopez: Lopez struggled mightily against Rogers Mtagwa, but hey, if the kid keeps blowing everyone away how do we know what he's got? "JuanMa" is poised to become Puerto Rico's next superstar fighter.

Timothy Bradley: Bradley's another one who's got the skills, the look, the story, and the hunger to be a major player in this game. It doesn't hurt that he's not afraid to face tough guys every time out. We can always use more of that.

So there you have it. 2008 was not so great. 2009 was better. And 2010 looks to be better yet. There's life left in this old business, still breath. That breath may stink, but it's breath nevertheless, and that's what counts. ■



Fight fans saw a vulnerable side to Juan Manuel Lopez in his struggle against Rogers Mtagwa. "JuanMa's" narrow victory showed many that he may have to do more to be considered Puerto Rico's next superstar—like beating number-one contender Celestino Caballero.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/GETTY IMAGES

David Haye's brashness has added energy to the dormant heavyweight class. Could Haye snap the deathgrip the Klitschkos have over the division?

DAVID

THE GIANT SLAYER

Haye Beats Valuev And Invigorates The Heavyweight Division

A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall ... As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

—I Samuel 17

By Brian Doogan

Nursing a suspected broken right hand—the reason, he explained, for the paucity of punches thrown in a fight which might have been won in more spectacular fashion with a sling

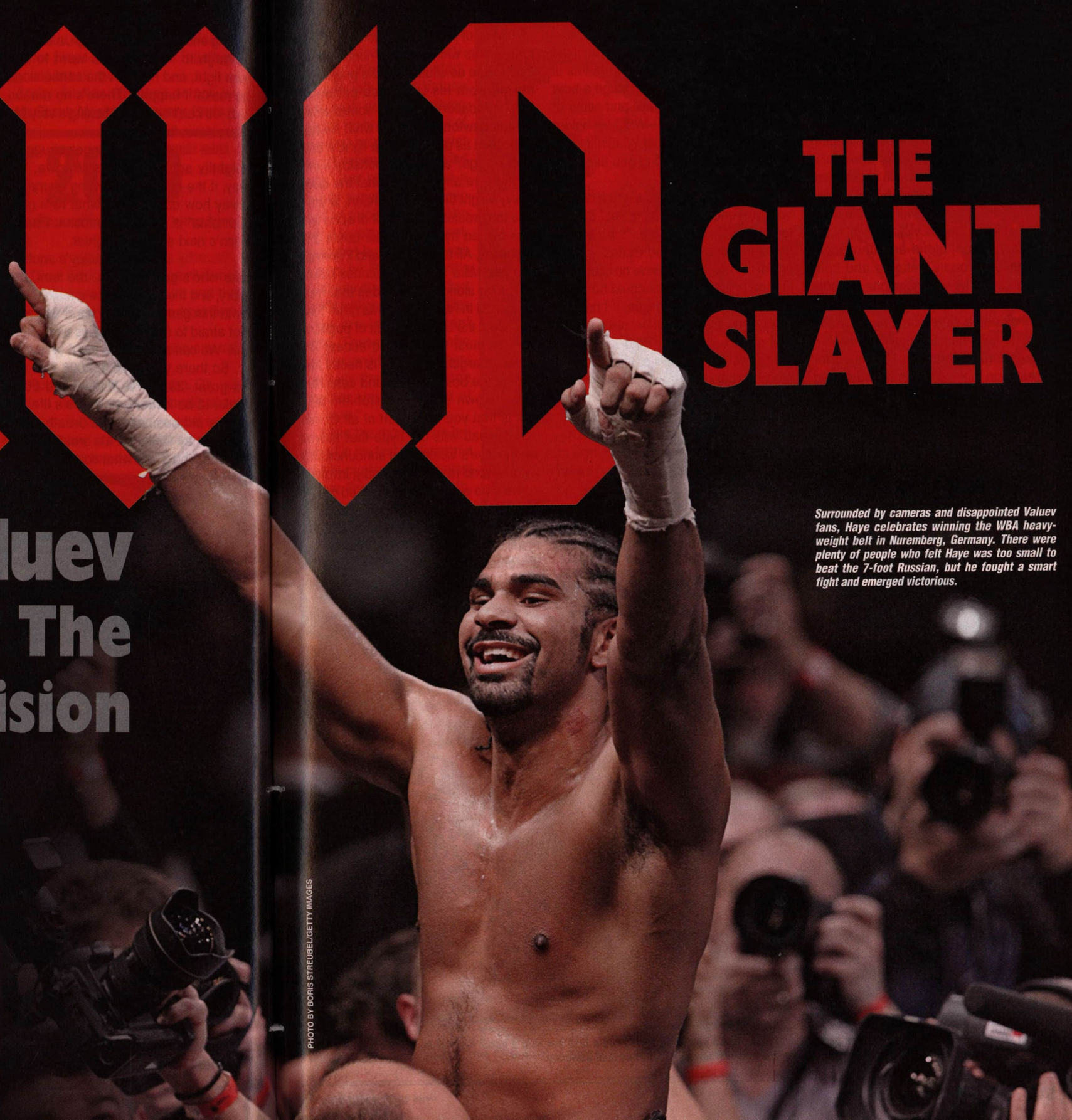


PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/GETTY IMAGES

Surrounded by cameras and disappointed Valuev fans, Haye celebrates winning the WBA heavyweight belt in Nuremberg, Germany. There were plenty of people who felt Haye was too small to beat the 7-foot Russian, but he fought a smart fight and emerged victorious.

and a stone instead—David Haye walked into the shop at a London gas station. He had been mobbed by supporters, ground crew and baggage staff, snappers, and TV crews on his return to Stansted Airport after flying home from Germany on a low-cost budget airline, but stopping off to buy some newspapers would be a more mundane exercise, he anticipated.

The shop was empty, the headlines—on the front pages as well as the back—were eulogies to his victory over Nicolay Valuev and, alone and unnoticed, he smiled broadly, relaxed and self-satisfied. But he was not alone for long. Not more than a minute had elapsed before people were stepping in off the street to congratulate Britain's new WBA heavyweight titleholder. He posed for pictures on their cell phones and signed autographs until, almost half an hour later, he was allowed to leave, cheered all the way by the elated onlookers as he made his way to his car.

Such will be the life of the giant slayer, a Bermondsey (south London) boy who was brought up in a council flat, but now stands on the threshold of a share in a $120-million fortune and a fight that could reignite heavyweight boxing.

Richard Schaefer, the CEO of Golden Boy Promotions, revealed that one of the major Las Vegas resorts and hotels is ready to stake this sum to stage a bout between 29-year-old Haye and either of the Klitschko brothers—WBC titleholder Vitali, 38, or 33-year-old Wladimir, who holds THE RING belt along with the WBO and IBF trinkets.

"This is the kind of event which is not a boxing event, it's a global event," Schaefer told BBC Radio 5 live. "If he comes and fights in the United States against one of the Klitschkos, I have no doubt that the total global receipts could be close to $120-million for one fight. If I had my choice, however, the perfect place for this fight would be Wembley Stadium. It really is a showdown of global proportions, and American boxing fans will embrace David because of his skills inside the ring but equally important are his skills outside the ring. He is charismatic, he is good-looking, and he is well spoken. He knows how to entertain and that is what we are looking for, not just in the US but also around the world. The world has been waiting for a heavyweight titleholder who cannot just fight but who is charismatic and here he is—his name is David Haye."

Not all of the reactions to Haye's majority points win over the 7-foot Russian Giant were as effusive as the praise that flowed from his US-based promoter. In *The Independent* chief sports writer James Lawton described what he had witnessed as an "insult of a fight, a dreg of the dregs," and he did not stop there: "If you care anything for what the world heavyweight title used to mean, when it was the greatest prize in all of sport and was owned by fighters like Louis and Dempsey, Ali and Frazier and Foreman and yes, Mike Tyson and Lennox Lewis, do not go along with any idea that what happened in Nuremberg was other than just about the absolute nadir of pugilism. Neither must we begin to accept the spurious argument that it is necessary to take the best of today and celebrate it for its own sake. The problem with this is that you are bereft of all values ... How bad was the hype that flowed when Haye's victory was announced? It went beyond reason and, sadly, involved some who are normally entitled to the highest respect."

Frank Warren, Britain's foremost promoter over the past 20 years, was another dissenter. "No-one can tell me Valuev is

PHOTO BY TIMM SCHAMBERGER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

For long stretches, Haye concentrated on defense, but then, like a spring uncoiling, he'd lash out with a quick burst of punches and move away again before Valuev could retaliate effectively. It was a well-considered plan that worked perfectly.

a quality heavyweight—he is not even an average heavyweight," Warren insisted. "People talk about Valuev as though he is something special. He is probably one of the worst heavyweights ever seen. Everybody gets carried away. Just because he is a giant of a man doesn't mean he is a good fighter. John Ruiz (Haye's next opponent, mandated by the WBA) was beaten by Roy Jones. It's when you start talking about the Klitschkos that you realize these are totally different fights. These are guys who can box and throw punches, and only then will you see whether Haye can do it at that level."

Haye claims to have injured his right hand landing high on Valuev's head in the second round. "It was like hitting a brick wall," said Haye.

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIMM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

From the moment he engaged in his first professional bout at cruiserweight against fellow Briton Tony Booth, Haye has aspired to thrive in the highest echelons. His potential persuaded the BBC to sign him to an exclusive 10-fight deal in those embryonic days, and for the silver medalist from the 2001 world amateur championships in Belfast, it was an opportunity to make a convincing quick hit. But the heavyweight division was where he knew he could hit hardest.

"At 6' 3", I'm pretty much the same build as Evander Holyfield, and he won an Olympic medal at light heavyweight and a world title at cruiserweight before moving up to heavyweight," Haye said before his pro baptism on a Sunday afternoon at York Hall, Bethnal Green. "My focus right now is on boxing as a cruiserweight and taking the traditional route, Southern Area title, British title, Commonwealth title, European title, and then a world title, and, ultimately, I want to be number one. If I didn't believe I could be, I wouldn't do this."

The second of three kids born to Deron and Jane, Haye has never been short of confidence. "I was six or seven at the time and I remember everyone saying, 'Have you seen this Tyson? He's the most dangerous man on the planet.' I wanted people to speak about me like that and soon it was all I wanted to do," he recalled. "I'd tell my teachers when they told me to listen or gave me homework that wasn't relevant to what I was going to do in life. I didn't want anything to fall back on. I thought, *if you put all your eggs in one basket then you ain't going to fail.* It wasn't the smartest plan in the world, but it worked."

Haye won each of his first 10 fights inside of four rounds, but in his next encounter, in September 2004, he fell flat on his face at Wembley Arena against veteran Carl Thompson, a former WBO cruiserweight titleholder, who stopped him in the fifth round. It was the night that changed Haye's career. The south Londoner with the Adonis-like body, who had done some modeling at Abercrombie and Fitch, did not want to be known as a pretty boy any longer.

"I was cutting more and more corners, but still getting results," he acknowledged. "So I looked at Carl Thompson and thought: *He's old. I'm younger. I'm fresher. I'm much more athletic. I can take this guy out.* I had a game plan to break him down slowly because he's a tough customer, but I got out there and heard the roar of the crowd and thought, *I'll knock him out quick.* It was the wrong mindset and I paid the price. I ran out of steam completely, punched myself out in four rounds. Adam Booth, my coach, saw I was gasping for air and had nothing left. Thompson put me down with a shot that wouldn't normally put me down, and Adam threw the towel in to save me for another day."

Booth, who first met Haye in the old Fitzroy Lodge Amateur Boxing Club, barely half a mile from Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, laid down the law. Talent would not be enough if he were to succeed in his career. He needed to start training properly, applying himself, and focusing on the long road ahead.

"Talented individuals in sporting history have a background of complacency," Booth explained. "They don't have to strive. So the way we deal with that with David is constantly putting stress in front of him."

In November 2007 at the Palais des Sport Marcel Cerdan in Paris, Haye won the world cruiserweight title with a seventh-round stoppage of Jean-Marc Mormeck. A second-round TKO of Wales's Enzo Maccarinelli quickly followed, and Haye set about taking on

PHOTO BY SHAUN CURRY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Somewhat to his surprise, Haye's triumph created quite a stir back home in England. While some tried to marginalize his victory, the general public was enthralled and mobbed Haye at the airport. He's pictured here at a London press conference, on his throne, flanked by a pair of Union Jacks.

the heavyweights, knocking out American Monte Barrett in the fifth round in November 2008 in London. He was all set to challenge the younger Klitschko, Wladimir, in June 2009, but he pulled out just two weeks before their scheduled encounter, citing a back injury. The whisper went round: Was Haye just all hype?

"Mentally, I've always found it harder to get up for those fights where I'm expected to destroy the guy, so when it comes to grafting hard, you don't really have the drive," he revealed. "When the Klitschko bout fell through that was a major disappointment—I was gutted—but you just have to go and set yourself on the next challenge. When I announced that I would be taking on Valuev, everyone was going, 'Whoa! I don't know about this guy, he's 7', are you sure you can beat him?' I wanted to hit the gym to prove everyone wrong. I need that fear in my belly. I need to think: *Right, if I don't get this right I can come a cropper here.* That's when I'm at my best. I've had that fear for the last few fights.

"I will only pick someone if they give me some sort of fear. For instance, when you watch Valuev you can see how effective he's been in his fights. He's so big, so strong, and he can't be knocked out. I said things about him like 'He is the ugliest thing I have ever seen. I have watched *Lord of the Rings* and films with strange-looking people, but for a human being to look like him, it's pretty shocking.' I called him 'hairy' and 'smelly' and 'the ugliest person I've ever seen,' but all the time I was training really hard and keeping my eye on the prize. I've always wanted to be the best heavyweight in the world and now I'm one step nearer."

Some observers wondered what Haye could hope to do against a behemoth who, with a sideways glance, could make Shrek cry for his mammy. But for all of his freakish characteristics, the 36-year-old "Beast From The East" has never punched his weight, which was just as well for Haye after Valuev tipped the scales at 316 pounds. Haye weighed a more average 217, so his speed and elusiveness needed to be determining factors inside the Nuremberg Arena, which they were.

Haye circled and Valuev gave chase. Slowly. The giant plodded forward with menace, but never found his range. His ponderous jab fell short repeatedly and he could not get his right hand off quick enough to hit Haye. No real punch of significance was landed in the first round and, regretfully, this became the story of the fight. Haye's plan was a tactical one. He would stay out of range for long stretches and then stealthily move in to throw an occasional burst before slipping back to the perimeter.

Towards the end of the second round, he landed a right hand high on Valuev's head and moved away. "I hurt my hand when I hit him; I couldn't believe it," Haye said later. "It was like hitting a brick wall. The hand might be broken, but I don't care. I found a way to win and that's all that matters."

It was not Haye's customary style, but it was effective, for Valuev, 50-2 (34), was so limited that his potency was negligible.

Haye, 23-2 (21), used his right hand sparingly, but his speed troubled Valuev. Boxing cleverly, the challenger remained out of harm's way and frustration crept into Valuev's predictable pattern of work. Mostly, the giant hit thin air, and Haye

expended little energy in making him miss. A fast combination of punches drilled into Valuev's head and torso in the seventh, but he countered well. Haye was unimpressed, and he moved in closer in the eighth and landed abundantly on his abundant target. He enjoyed further success in the ninth, and stamina did not appear to be an issue for him. Valuev remained strong, too, but he could not nail Haye or corral him into a corner.

The most notable moment of the night was saved until the final round, when Haye landed a left-right and a follow-up left that had Valuev staggering momentarily, like a man thrown out of a pub after several drinks too many. He managed to gather himself, but the fight and the title were gone.

Still, the final bell might have left Haye with some anxiety about getting a decision in Germany, but his demeanor disguised this well, for the celebrations began immediately.

Juan Manuel Garcia Reyes (Spain) scored the bout 114-114, but Stefano Carozza (Italy) and Tom Miller (US) both scored 116-112 for Haye. The giant, who had come tumbling down to the bottom of the beanstalk, remained almost motionless.

"I got out at Stansted Airport on Sunday and there were people waiting just to see me, people who had driven miles. It was very strange because I wasn't expecting a mob like that at all," Haye admitted two days later. "I've heard it before, 'Your life is going to change,' but I can see what it means now. I've had women coming up, kids, people I would assume were not interested in boxing. A friend of mine is a teacher, and he said the children were talking about it in the playground, the way we did when Frank Bruno fought Mike Tyson. It seems to have put boxing back on the map in the UK. If Valuev had been 6' 3", I'm sure there wouldn't have been the interest, but I was getting texts saying people were running up and down the streets in Bermondsey and Crystal Palace with Union Jacks going bananas, like England had won the World Cup, which is fantastic.

"Usually, I look for my reports in the boxing section, the last page of the sports coverage but, bosh, there I was on the back page and on the front page too.

"I think what got people interested was that it wasn't a fight in which everybody knew who would win. They knew who they wanted to win because they wanted the British guy to beat the Russian, but they looked at the two of us and genuinely didn't know how I was going to do it. Then I was giving it all the mouth, coming across quite cocky, so they wanted to see how it played out. What attracted them to the fight is what attracted me. I take on the biggest challenges in life. Going from cruiserweight champion to heavyweight champion has only been done by Evander Holyfield, so that interested me, and people wanted to find out how I could possibly beat this guy. I showed them, with skill, athleticism, and determination."

His next challenger, Ruiz, stopped Adnan Serin, a journeyman from Germany, in the seventh round on the undercard. The first Latino to win a heavyweight title dominated without taking risks and forced Serin's corner to throw in the towel with a series of clubbing right hands. Having twice been beaten by Valuev, Ruiz is not expected to pose too much of a problem for Haye.

"I plan to beat up Ruiz next and then move on to the Klitschkos," Haye predicted with typical bravado.

The Ukrainians are big men, too, not as big as Valuev, but significantly more formidable. David ought to bring along his sling before climbing into the ring with either of them—and as many stones as he can carry. ■

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER HASSENSTEIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Vitali Klitschko congratulates his brother Wladimir immediately after Wladimir stopped Ruslan Chagaev to win THE RING heavyweight championship in June 2009. Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy Promotions, believes a match between Haye and one of the Klistchkos could generate as much as $120 million.

Brian Doogan, THE RING's European correspondent, was ringside in Nuremberg for Haye-Valuev.

DAWSON'S DILEMMA

Sometimes Just Winning Isn't Enough

By Joseph Santoliquito
PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

They were chanting Chad Dawson's name in the streets of Hartford, Connecticut, into the early hours of the morning. The conquering hero himself walked through the front doors of the Hartford Hilton and was immediately greeted with a standing ovation from the guests who had gathered in the hopes of just getting a glimpse of him.

But amid the cheers, back slaps, and what seemed an interminable line of admirers came the whispers and suggestions. Words such as "finishing," "closing," and "ending" were mixed in with the accolades, something even Dawson's most devoted fans know he must do if he's ever going to attain a celebrity status beyond the klatch of Connecticut faithful.

With each suggestion, Dawson would knowingly nod and then get ready to smile for the next group he was going to take a picture with.

Yes, even after "Bad Chad" had vanquished Glen Johnson a second time to run his unbeaten record to 29-0 (17) with 1 no-contest, a lot of folks still believe that he needs to be nudged in a more aggressive direction if he wants to become a superstar.

It might be instructive for Dawson to pay attention to the excitement created in the bout that immediately preceded his rematch with Johnson, in which junior middleweight contender Alfredo Angulo annihilated previously undefeated Harry Joe Yorgey in the third round. It was an interesting juxtaposition: Dawson easily outpointed Johnson before a hometown crowd but received a smattering of boos along the way. Mexican Angulo, on the other hand, ripped through his overmatched opponent with gusto, much to the great delight of the 5,230 fans at Hartford's XL Center.

Dawson rocks Johnson with a hard left en route to dominating the former world champion and winning a unanimous decision. It was one of the best performances of Dawson's career, but didn't provide much excitement.

Fight fans like knockouts. They gravitate toward fighters who take risks, who throw themselves completely into the moment. Dawson, though one of the better technicians in the game today, has yet to do that. He showed against Johnson that he could dictate the tempo of a fight from start to finish against a quality opponent. But how far will outboxing opponents get him? Dawson certainly looks capable of putting his foot down harder on the gas pedal, but is he willing to take a few shots to land that devastating knockout blow? And if not, will just winning be enough to carry him to greater heights?

To a large degree, that depends on the fighter's outside-of-the-ring persona. Winky Wright and the late Vernon Forrest were both terrific craftsmen with very little pizzazz on either side of the ropes. Conversely, Floyd Mayweather and the current version of Bernard Hopkins can also be boring with a safety-first approach, but their over-the-top personalities help compensate. Dawson, however, is more like Wright and Forrest than "Money" Mayweather and B-Hop.

Angulo doesn't have a huge fan base, but after extinguishing Yorgey in the manner in which he did, more and more fans will take notice. His seek-and-destroy attitude during the three rounds was mesmerizing. The fans who came to support Dawson will certainly remember Angulo, 17-1 (14), who has been diligently working to erase the one flaw on his record, his decision loss to Kermit Cintron in May 2009. Yorgey, 22-1-1 (10), just happened to be in the way.

"Angulo's loss to Cintron has stuck with him, and he wanted to make an emphatic point," HBO's blow-by-blow announcer Jim Lampley said. "Angulo made his point, and made it quickly. It was an interesting scenario, because you also found out something else. Chad Dawson not only fights the same fight over and over again, he fights the same rounds over and over again.

"It was interesting, because you have someone like Angulo, with limited talent, looking for the knockout, looking to end his opponent, and here you have Dawson, who I would say has talent. But he doesn't have punching power. Punching power comes from a mentality. There are many, many fighters, like Dawson, who bank on the notion that winning is enough. But winning is not what makes you a star in boxing."

Despite ultimately winning a unanimous decision by scores of 117-111 (Glenn Feldman), and 115-113 twice (Duane Ford and Michael Pernick), Dawson heard the boos from a partisan crowd that would have loved nothing more than to see him finish the wily Johnson, 49-13-2 (33 KOs). But the boos from his people didn't sting Dawson the way you would think.

"I liked it," Dawson admitted. "I'm happy with the way things are moving in my career, even the booing. I heard the boos. The boos didn't hurt at all. I actually kind of liked it. I knew I was doing what I was supposed to be doing. I kept fighting the same fight. I watched the fight the next morning, and I saw

Dawson's performance was made to appear more pedestrian by the explosive fight that preceded it on the HBO telecast, in which Alfredo Angulo overwhelmed Harry Yorgey for a third-round knockout.

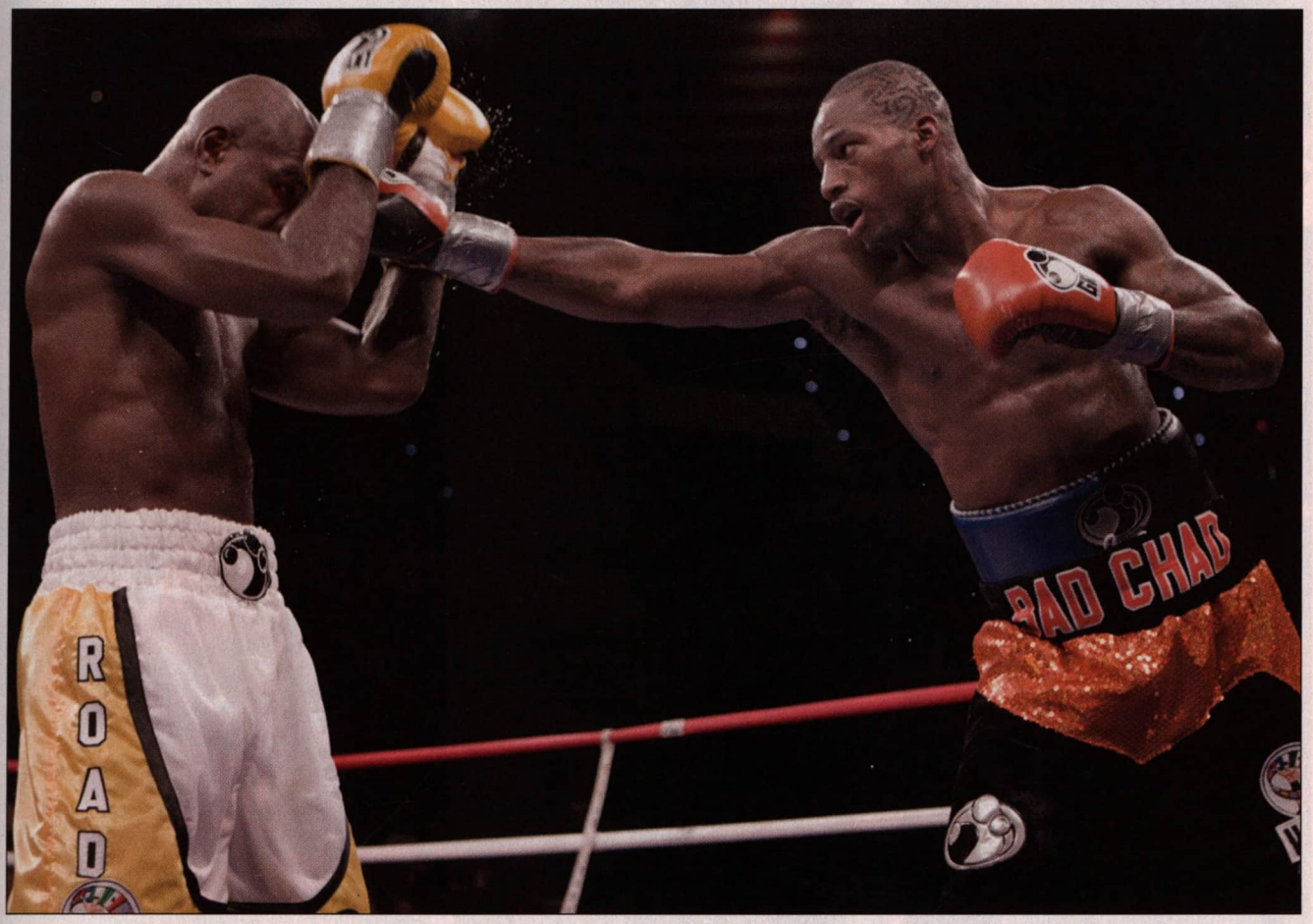
I could have went after Johnson and got the better of him. Even Lou DiBella (Johnson's promoter) came up to me after the fight and told me I could have taken his guy out.

"I didn't. It is something I would like to work on. But I also realize there are different types of fans out there. Some want to see knockouts, like everyone saw in the Angulo fight, and some want to see boxing. I personally want to see boxing. Some people don't understand what's going on inside that ring. They don't see how strategic I am."

HBO analyst Max Kellerman and Dawson's trainer, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, are supporters of Dawson's approach. Muhammad fought much the same way as Dawson, but with more pop in his punch. In some respects, Dawson could be compared to former light heavyweight champion and Hall of Famer Harold Johnson, a great boxer but never a huge box-office attraction.

Kellerman and Muhammad feel that as long as Dawson wins, and wins convincingly, he can become appealing

Johnson, who many people thought should have gotten the decision in his first fight with Dawson, had his moments in the rematch. But they were infrequent, and the 40-year-old "Road Warrior" simply couldn't match Dawson's speed and agility, and had no beef with the decision.



Whenever Johnson enjoyed even a modicum of success, Dawson quickly regained control with his southpaw jab and movement.

to a wider audience. He had arguably his best performance in the Johnson rematch, ranking up there with his victory over Tomasz Adamek back in 2007, which is looking more and more impressive with each of the world cruiserweight's successes.

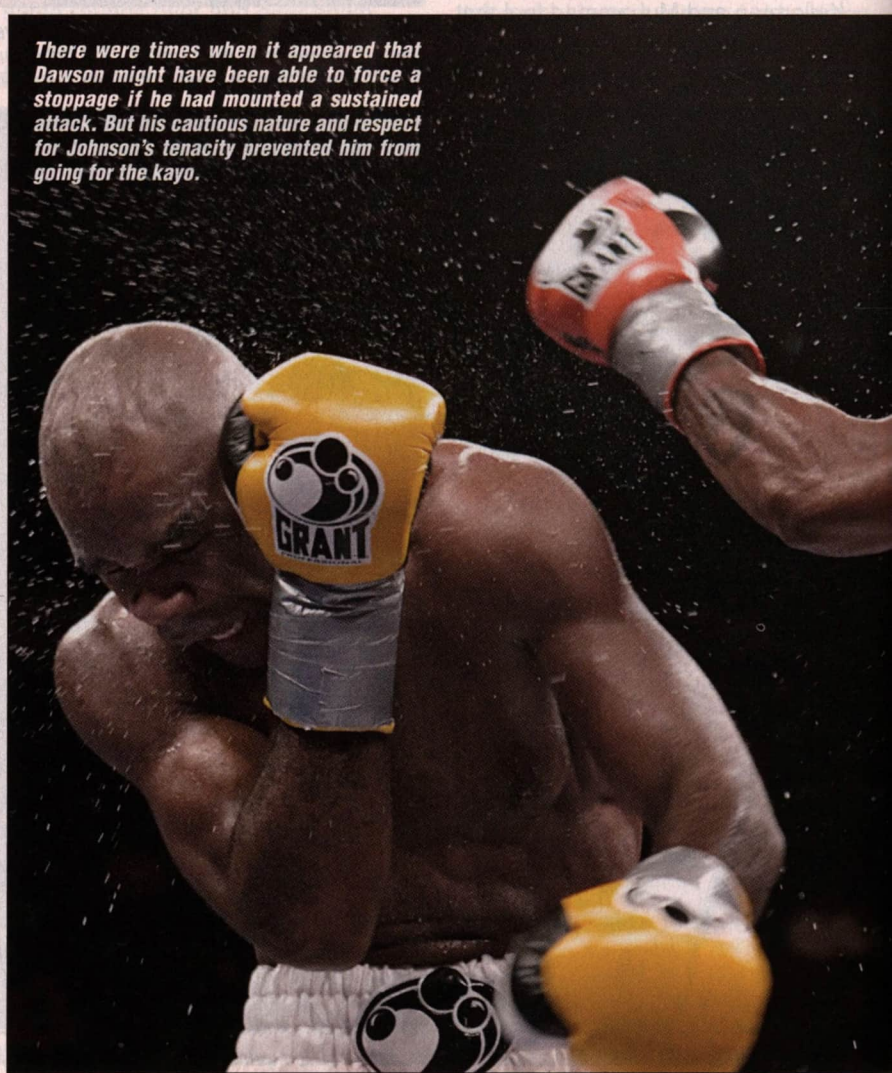
Dawson displayed real brilliance at times, causing Johnson to twist and turn under a barrage of punches. There was one moment in the 10th when he had Johnson reeling, covering up on the defensive. Dawson faltered in the fifth but re-asserted himself in the sixth. But just when it appeared Dawson could finish off the rawhide veteran, Dawson stepped back.

"That's me being too cautious, and it's something I'm constantly told about," Dawson said. "I tried keeping in mind how shifty and tricky Johnson could be. It's why I backed away. But again, I was in control and felt comfortable in the position I was in."

That may not sit well with some, but it's okay by others.

"I would strongly disagree with those who say Dawson wasn't entertaining against Glen Johnson," Kellerman said. "Dawson needs to sustain his level of dominance, and in this Johnson fight, it wasn't a problem. This is his first fight against a top opponent when he was consistently dominant. It's a mistake to try to be something that he's not, and he's not Alfredo Angulo. My overarching point with Dawson is to keep turning performances in like he did against Johnson. Don't clinch, keep punching, don't run, don't hold, and don't let up. The rest will take care of itself. Why would he try to be Angulo? Dawson has reach, skills, and ability. Why fight like Angulo?"

It sounds as if Muhammad would not let that happen anyway. His bottom line is simple: Winning. He also wants to protect Dawson, a doting father of three young boys and devoted husband



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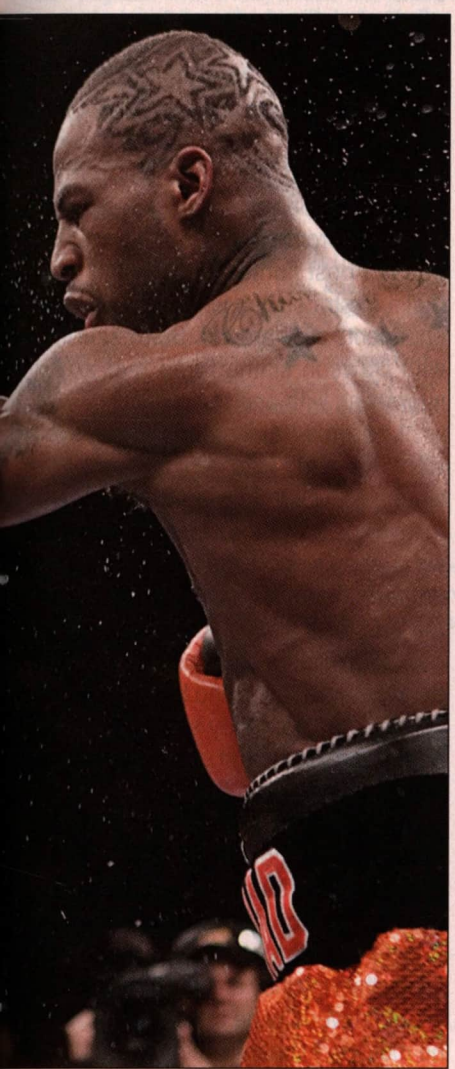
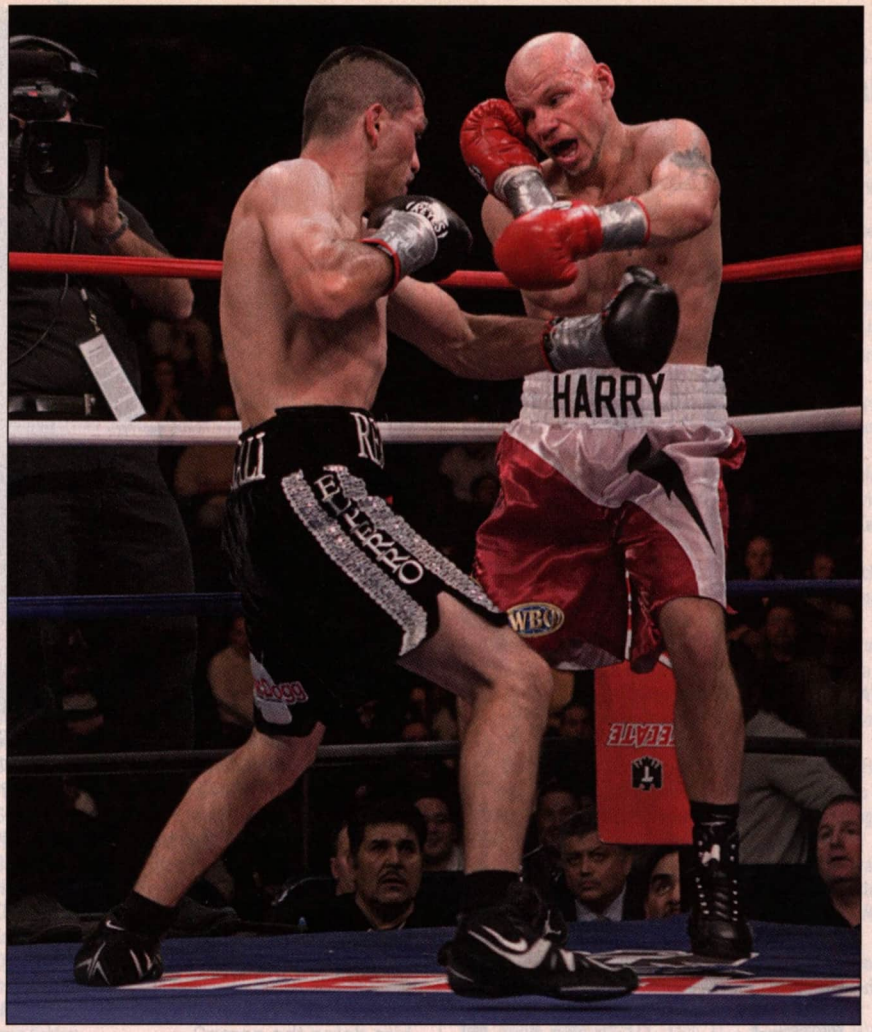
to his wife, Crystal. The trainer is mystified why fans look at Dawson and Mayweather in a certain way, and why anyone would want to keep fighting like Angulo, who, Muhammad points out, was thoroughly outboxed by Cintron.

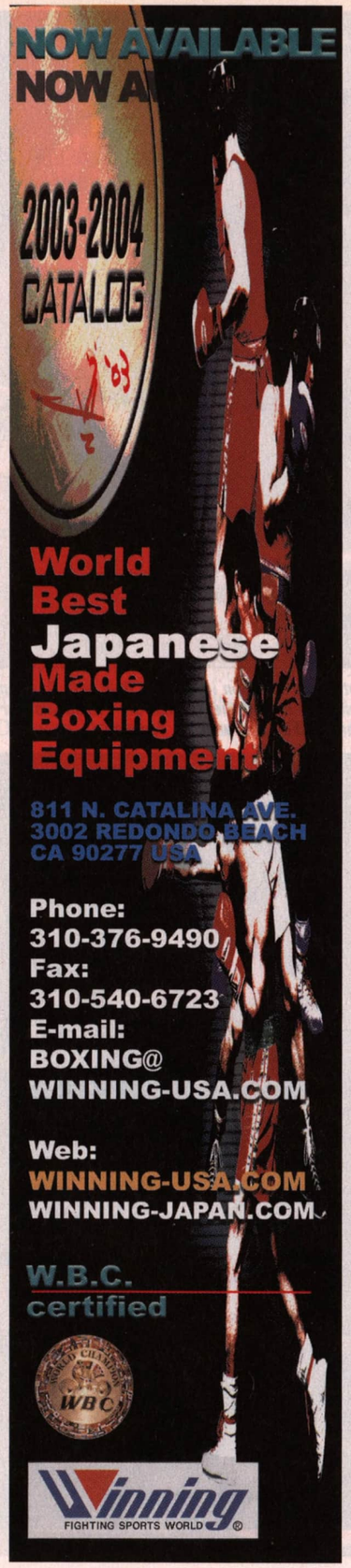
Muhammad's plans are long term with Dawson—and if the fans and media expect more, that's too bad.

"At the end of the day, I want Chad to be able to enjoy his life and his kids, and I want people to understand that," Muhammad said. "I don't want him going to a speech therapist when he's done fighting. It's easier said than done to knock people out. People are going to criticize Chad whether he wins or loses. They're going to talk about Chad until he retires. We're going to keep on doing what we're doing. We have an undefeated record, and there are those who still find faults. Chad is going to get better and better, and Chad can punch. I like Chad's style. It was my





Angulo's final attack was breathtaking in its all-out savagery, which is the kind of thing that most boxing fans crave. Dawson is never going to be an Angulo-type slugger, but he certainly has the wherewithal to be more exciting. He's not, however, a risk taker, so a change in style is unlikely.



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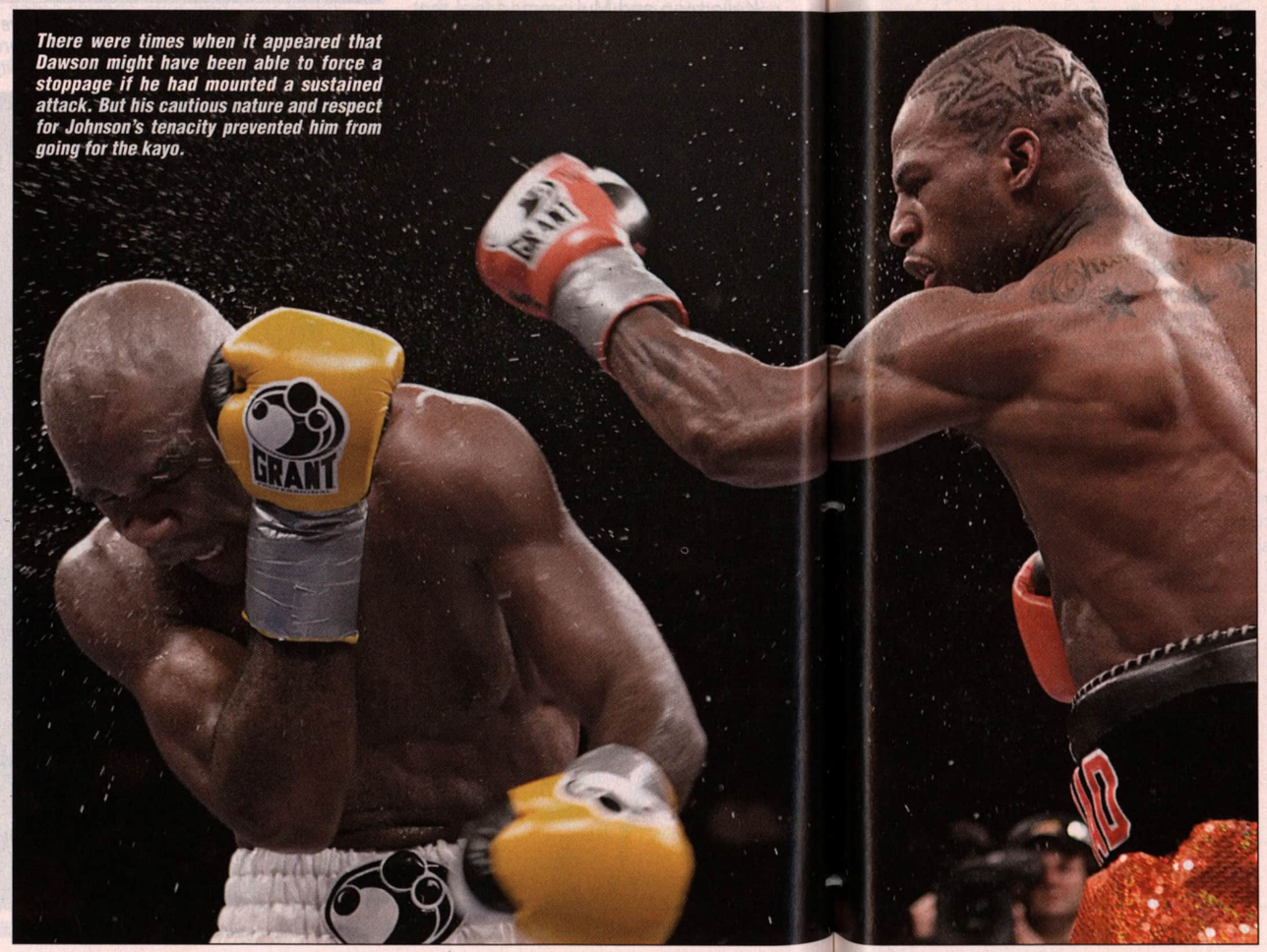

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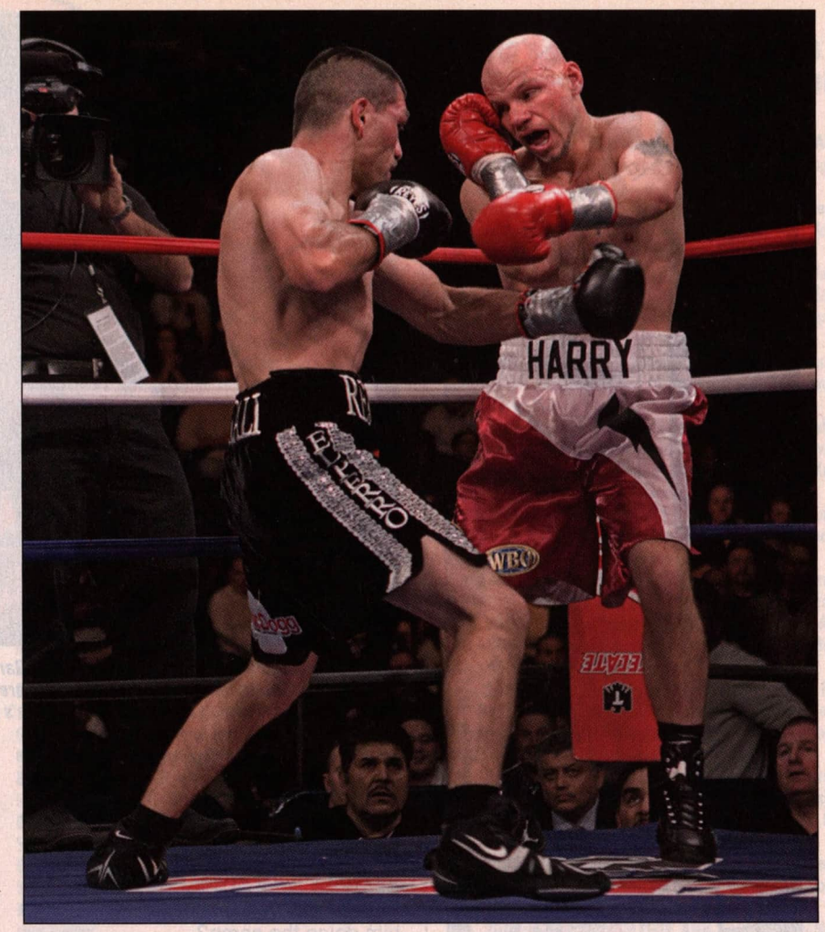

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Dawson celebrates with his son and promoter Gary Shaw, as referee Mike Ortega raises his arm in victory. Shaw would like to see Dawson tally more knockouts, but "Bad Chad" and his trainer, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, are happy with the way he's fighting.

style. It's hit and don't get hit. I won't change that style."

Dawson is perplexed as to what more he has to do to please. Mayweather doesn't set the world afire with his defensive approach. What's wrong with him doing the same?

Of course, he means inside the ring. Nobody has to be concerned about where Dawson is at two or three in the morning, and it's highly unlikely that you'll ever see his name on a police blotter. Moreover, he's not the type to ham it up as a participant in a WWE event. Actually, Dawson wonders why more people can't relate to his story.

"I'm a family man, I have three great kids and a beautiful wife. So do I have to go around with big diamond earrings hanging from my ears, and gold bracelets, gold chains around my neck? Do I need to throw money in the air like Floyd Mayweather?" said Dawson, slightly agitated. "I would think my lifestyle would be appealing. I grew up with a father who had seven kids by the time he was 20. There was me and my four brothers in the same small apartment room together. There were times when we didn't have anything to eat, and the last time I ate during the day was at lunch in school. I learned to appreciate everything, and to preserve everything I have. Maybe it's the reason why I fight the way I do."

Maybe that explains why during prefight meetings with Dawson and his team, promoter Gary Shaw said he has the best fighter in the world, and that it frustrates him when Dawson lets opponents stick around. Shaw said this with Dawson sitting three feet away, interacting with one of his sons.

"I heard what Angulo did before I went out, and I was very pleased with what I did," said Dawson. "I also heard the whispers and the comments. I know what people want me to do, and I try not to let it bother me. Sometimes I'm too cautious when I know I have the guy. But I'm more cautious than I should be. If I stay in there and bang, I'll make fights closer than they should be. That happened in the first Johnson fight. It won't happen again."

It's a refrain that may never change, regardless of how much we'd like to see Dawson reach out and push the knockout button the way Angulo does. Maybe Dawson will stay content with things the way they are, but if he doesn't, he can never say he doesn't know what he must do to change things. ■

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COMEBACK KING

Legendary Promoter Plots Return To Prominence

By David Mayo

At his first Las Vegas show in years, there was Don King, promoting the person he promotes best, himself. His headliner lost, but a fan in the crowd struck his own jackpot by winning a side promotion to determine the best King look-alike—and when he directly touches the people, King often wins big himself.

King is back, sort of, if not exactly in his once-ubiquitous way. What happened to his once-vast boxing business this decade isn't so much different than the many tales of woe that have struck other empires, big and small, at the same time. Too little discretionary income for his consumers, a lost lawsuit here, downsizing at his corporate office there, a few too many lost clients, a bit too much new competition.

The basis for King slipping down the promotional rung from the heights he once shared only with his archrival, Bob Arum, has many tentacles—and so does the basis for his strategy for rebuilding the business.

He says Las Vegas lost its direction, and because of that, opportunity exists. The down economy, he says, is the perfect climate for an entrepreneurial mind to step into a void and create industry from dreams and faith, the same two attributes he cites as the foundation for Las Vegas' creation in the first place.

At press time, King still had 11 titleholders under contract, although he could put them all on one card and not have a decent pay-per-view show. Vic Darchinyan is as big a name as King has under contract. Yet King envisions himself using the same personal elements for his renaissance he did in the 1970s, when an unknown former numbers runner from Ohio signed Muhammad Ali for an exhibition match, then two years later secured the Ali-George Foreman epic in Zaire, which vaulted him into promotional prominence.

"I used my wit and grit and intellect, because that's all I had," King said. "I had to go to Africa, even though I had the best two athletes in the world signed, because no one in America would touch me, not because I didn't have the athletes, but because I was black. They couldn't have that. So it became reverse globalization. It was a portend of the future. It was a precursor."

When King spoke to THE RING, he had just returned from a spurious heavyweight championship fight between David Haye and Nicolay Valuev in Germany that underscored the sorry state of that division. But it fed his own television network, which is one of the methods the 78-year-old hopes will fuel his effort to rise back to the top of the promotional pile.

"We took a show that absolutely was nothing to the extent of a heavyweight championship fight between Ali and Foreman in Zaire," he said. "But I took it and made it one on a lower scale, and it was tremendous, we took it to 201

countries. When you promote people, you promote the event and you promote to the public."

In his heyday, King's marathon cards were the envy of all promoters. Four title bouts on the same show were commonplace. But so was the subjugation of some of the best fighters on his roster, most notably Julio Cesar Chavez, who spent too many nights playing second fiddle to Mike Tyson until the latter went to prison, and Chavez began carrying pay-per-view shows on his own.

"Julio Cesar Chavez," said Arum, "was the most under-promoted fighter in the history of boxing."

Arum was to King what Joe Frazier was to Ali, what Wilt Chamberlain was to Bill Russell, what the Red Sox are to the Yankees, what brunettes are to blondes. They promoted different people and in far different fashions. And they kept each other honest with heated competition in their actions and hatred in their hearts. With the disputed result

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Bob Arum and King have been bitter rivals over the years, but occasionally worked together when it made financial sense. But following the Trinidad-De La Hoya fight in 1999, they didn't co-promote again until the Floyd Mayweather-Zab Judah fight in 2006.

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIMM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

King recently co-promoted the Valuev-Haye heavyweight fight in Nuremberg, Germany. It was a far cry from "The Rumble In The Jungle" or "The Thrilla In Manila," but it showed that King is still an international player and also provided content for his TV network.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DON KING PRODUCTIONS

All is forgiven: One of the weirdest aspects of King's comeback is the reunion between him and Mike Tyson. King gave Mike a gig doing some color commentary on a recent card and even hinted that Tyson might also make a comeback.

of their Felix Trinidad-Oscar De La Hoya co-promotion a decade ago, Arum's distaste for their relationship grew, and they did not co-promote again until the Floyd Mayweather-Zab Judah fight in 2006.

Arum usurped King for many reasons this decade, and his distaste for his longtime rival faded as they creep closer to becoming octogenarians.

"We're too old to worry about it anymore," Arum said.

The reasons King's promotional star dimmed are multi-faceted. A lack of depth in his roster came on quickly, hastened by an over-reliance on heavyweights. When Tyson's career fizzled out, and the heavyweight division collapsed, Arum's strength in the lighter-weight divisions allowed Top Rank to easily surpass Don King Productions. King was forced to downsize his Florida base of operations. And, finally, a new competitor emerged in Golden Boy Promotions.

"In the promotional field, I don't have any competition," King said. "But what you have is dealsmanship, where they utilize the benefits of the attraction to the betterment of their deals, which I respect. That's what Richard Schaefer did with Golden Boy. Golden Boy became like the donkey and the carrot. The carrot was that he was the only one who could make a pay-per-view profitable for HBO and it kept HBO in the spotlight. Then, he said 'I'm going to take this away from you unless you come and do A, B, C.' So through negotiation and compromise, he ended up getting all the dates on HBO, and once they got them all, they fell back into the corporate world and now they've got to live up to the agreements that they made. Five stars to them. They don't really have anything they can promote, but they've gotten name recognition for their fighters, and because of that, the network has to bring them back, even after they lose. I understand what's going on, but you can't complain. You have to deal with what is real. You have to create and initiate."

Golden Boy's favored arrangement with HBO gnaws at rival promoters, although King enjoyed the same treatment for several years. Thirty years ago, he became the first promoter to sell HBO a heavyweight title telecast with the Larry Holmes-Mike Weaver fight, when King

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declined an $800,000 license fee from ABC to take HBO's $125,000. The idea, he said, was to drive competition with a new television entity. After several years, the ultimate result was network television's complete withdrawal from the boxing business.

Today, King's tepid roster of fighters makes a major HBO date a difficult sell. All he needs, he said, is to secure the right headliners, and the rest will take care of itself.

"You're always one fighter away, one attraction away," he said. "One attraction can open the doors for people to come in. Things are rough, but it's like anything else. I'm watching businesses around the world go belly up. Change is in the air. You can't holler about persecution and oppression, and then when you get to the affluent line, call that same persecution 'exclusivity.'"

While his Don King Network is viewed by most as a bridge to the day when he can find that major attraction and regain footing with the subscription networks, King said that isn't the case.

"If you had Ali in Ali's time, and technology in technology's time, and if you had that all together, man, what are you talking about?" he said. "Then, you have globalization. That's what I envisioned when I created my own network, and it's a very difficult task because, naturally, if people don't understand something they're apprehensive of it. I've found all sorts of stumbling blocks. But I've worked very hard to get this thing onto the air, and I own most of my own content, so I've got programming. It's a matter of having attractions and bringing them to the people.

"You've got packagers with HBO, you've got packagers with Showtime. They don't promote. They provide license fees. Where they find fault with me is that I can't be controlled, I can't be intimidated, and I know that the attraction is the promotion, not the network. They've flipped it. The networks got to be important by having the best attractions. Then, they grabbed that power and they started dictating who, what, how, where, when it should be done. You don't play the game where you can be judge, jury, and executioner. You play the game so the people can identify with what you're doing and can be a part of it, and you have to have the attraction to do that."

King went back to Las Vegas with a Halloween show at the casino boxing

PHOTO COURTESY OF DON KING PRODUCTIONS

King's first Las Vegas promotion in a number of years featured a sizzling main event between Jonnhy Perez and Joseph "King Kong" Agbeko. But King's fighter, Agbeko, lost the fight, putting a bit of a damper on an otherwise good night for King.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

King poses with Tyson and Phil Ruffin, chairman of the board at the Treasure Island Casino, the venue for Perez-Agbeko. King believes he has the right partner in Ruffin to help him reestablish his former prominence in Las Vegas.

outpost of Treasure Island. His headliner, bantamweight Joseph "King Kong" Agbeko, lost to Yonnhy Perez. But the relationship he struck with casino owner Phil Ruffin encouraged King, and he has joined forces with a new player in Las Vegas boxing at a time when the city is prime for resurgence on many levels.

"It's always a great time to gamble on Las Vegas, but they lost their way because they became more interested in the corporate mentality than in the people mentality," King said. "The guys who created Las Vegas and made it a gambling oasis, made it like a red-light district, and the decadence came along with it, then they started to bring in sophistication with it. But the people were the most important. They had the guy who would go out and get the players and the high rollers. They built that whole city on dreams and faith. Then, they got to rolling real good, and had all these buildings, and they forgot about what they built it for. They built it for the people. You had to be able to seduce them, to treat them, to identify with them, to make them feel special, because they are. When I came in there, I gave them a stimulus program.

"I went there because of Phil Ruffin. We made an agreement and shook hands, on his word, and he fulfilled every obligation of that commitment and handshake. That was how I started. I started on faith and the reliance on a word, a handshake. I have to say, Phil Ruffin's handshake is better than most people you deal with under a contract. That's how Vegas used to operate, and I found that in Phil Ruffin. He's the chairman of the board. He doesn't have any board he has to go get approval from, and he was a pleasure and a delight to work with."

King still has the savvy of a man who promoted or co-promoted seven of the 10 most-purchased pay-per-view cards in history, and 12 of the top 20 highest-grossing live gates in Nevada history, all of them in the 1990s, and views his job as not that much different than that of the fighters he promotes.

"Boxing is life," King said. "It's as close to life as any sport can be. Man to man, you can't send in a substitute when somebody gets hurt, if you run out of gas there's no gas station in sight. You have to be able to deal with the ups and the downs, the problems and the joys. It's the same with promoting boxing. You have to be able to deal with whatever comes. That's what trailblazers do."

King has often been criticized for his promotional techniques, which often focus less on the fighters than the promoter. His first publicist, Bill Caplan, who now is a publicist for Arum, said "some promoters, and I mean great promoters, don't get it when it comes to publicity.

"I always told Arum, and not just because he signs my checks now, that if he didn't want to become a rich attorney and rich promoter, he would have been a great publicist because he has great ideas," Caplan said. "King was always more interested in publicizing himself. He was always a great competitor for Arum. But at some point, I think he just lost his passion for it, for whatever reason."

King's current publicist, Alan Hopper, said that passion has been fanned lately, and an impassioned King is a formidable one.

"I've learned never to underestimate the man," Hopper said, "because he can do things by the sheer force of his will." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

WHO WOULD WIN AND WHY

Floyd Mayweather vs. Ten All-Time Welterweight Greats

By Gavin Evans

How would the 2010 version of Floyd "Money" Mayweather have fared against 10 of the best 147-pound division has had over the last century?

It has to be conceded that if we were to rank Mayweather on the basis of his welterweight record alone, he'd fall well short. He may be 40-0 (25), but at 147 or above he's only 6-0. But this is about ability rather than record, so let's be clear: We're talking about Mayweather as he is now, against, say, Henry Armstrong as he was in 1938.

Given all the advances in terms of diet, training, and technique, we'll make one allowance for the old-timers: These fights will take place under the rules as then rather than now—15 rounds, six-ounce gloves, same-day weigh-in (although this wouldn't worry Mayweather who makes 147-pounds with ease).

The next problem is to pick Floyd's 10 opponents. If we were to rate them solely on what they achieved at welterweight, we'd need to include men from the turn of the 19th century such as Tommy Ryan and Joe Walcott. But that would stack things too strongly in Floyd's favor. Unless you're of the Nat Fleischer school, which views the early champions as men of a higher order, possessing skills long-lost, you'd have to concede that Mayweather would have too much in his arsenal of skills for anyone from that era. Take a look at YouTube fights from the 1900s to see what we mean.

Even keeping it to the last 100 years there are greats we have to leave out. Still, the list we've picked will give Pretty Boy Floyd plenty to think about.

PHOTO BY MARK RALSTON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

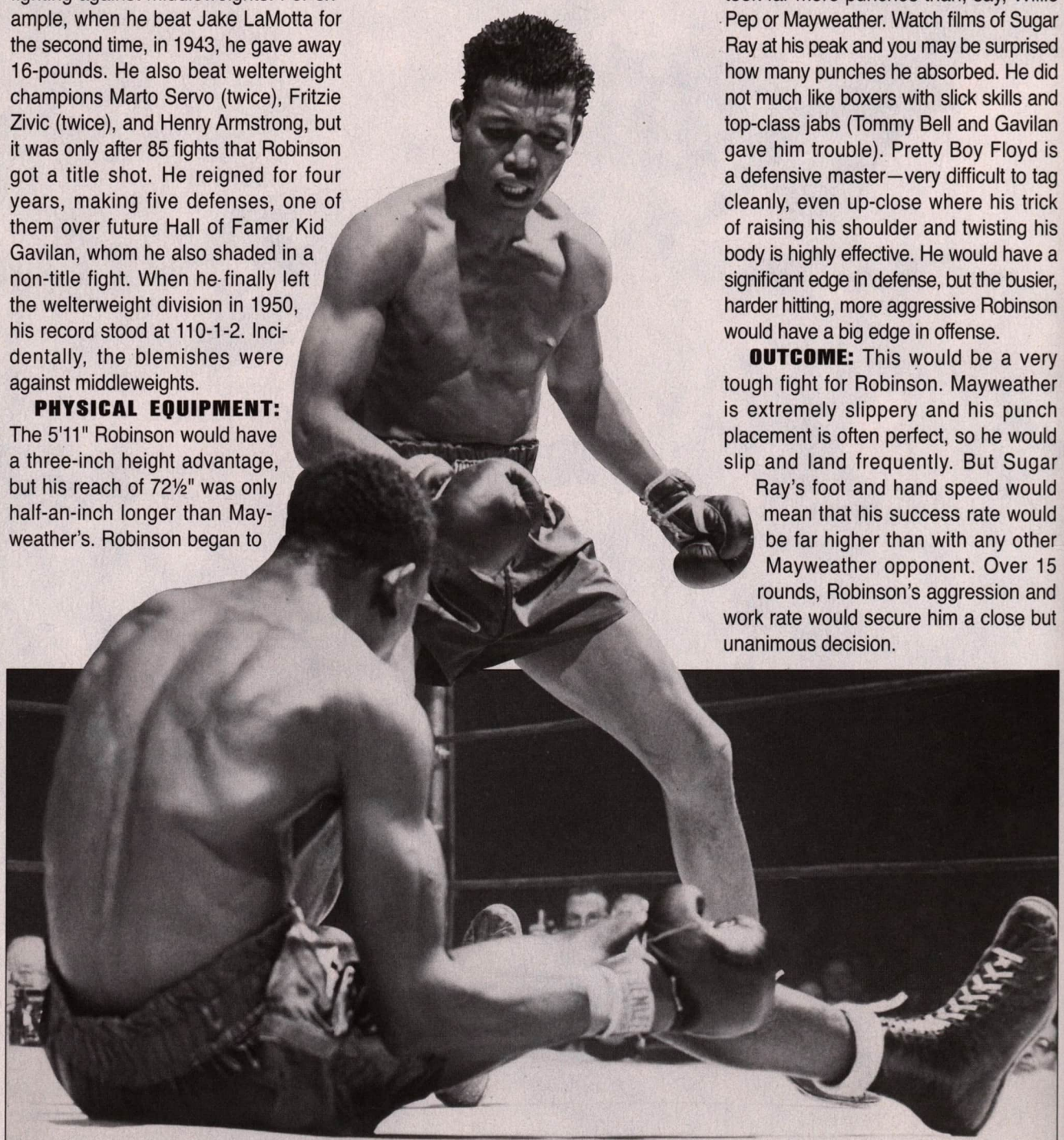
Mayweather vs. Sugar Ray Robinson

CREDENTIALS: Mayweather, who did most of his fighting at junior lightweight, can't compare with Robinson when it comes to his welterweight record. Sugar Ray had his first 23 fights at or around lightweight, and after nine months as a professional, trounced reigning champion Sammy Angott. From 1941 to 1950, he was a welterweight who did most of his fighting against middleweights. For example, when he beat Jake LaMotta for the second time, in 1943, he gave away 16-pounds. He also beat welterweight champions Marto Servo (twice), Fritzie Zivic (twice), and Henry Armstrong, but it was only after 85 fights that Robinson got a title shot. He reigned for four years, making five defenses, one of them over future Hall of Famer Kid Gavilan, whom he also shaded in a non-title fight. When he finally left the welterweight division in 1950, his record stood at 110-1-2. Incidentally, the blemishes were against middleweights.

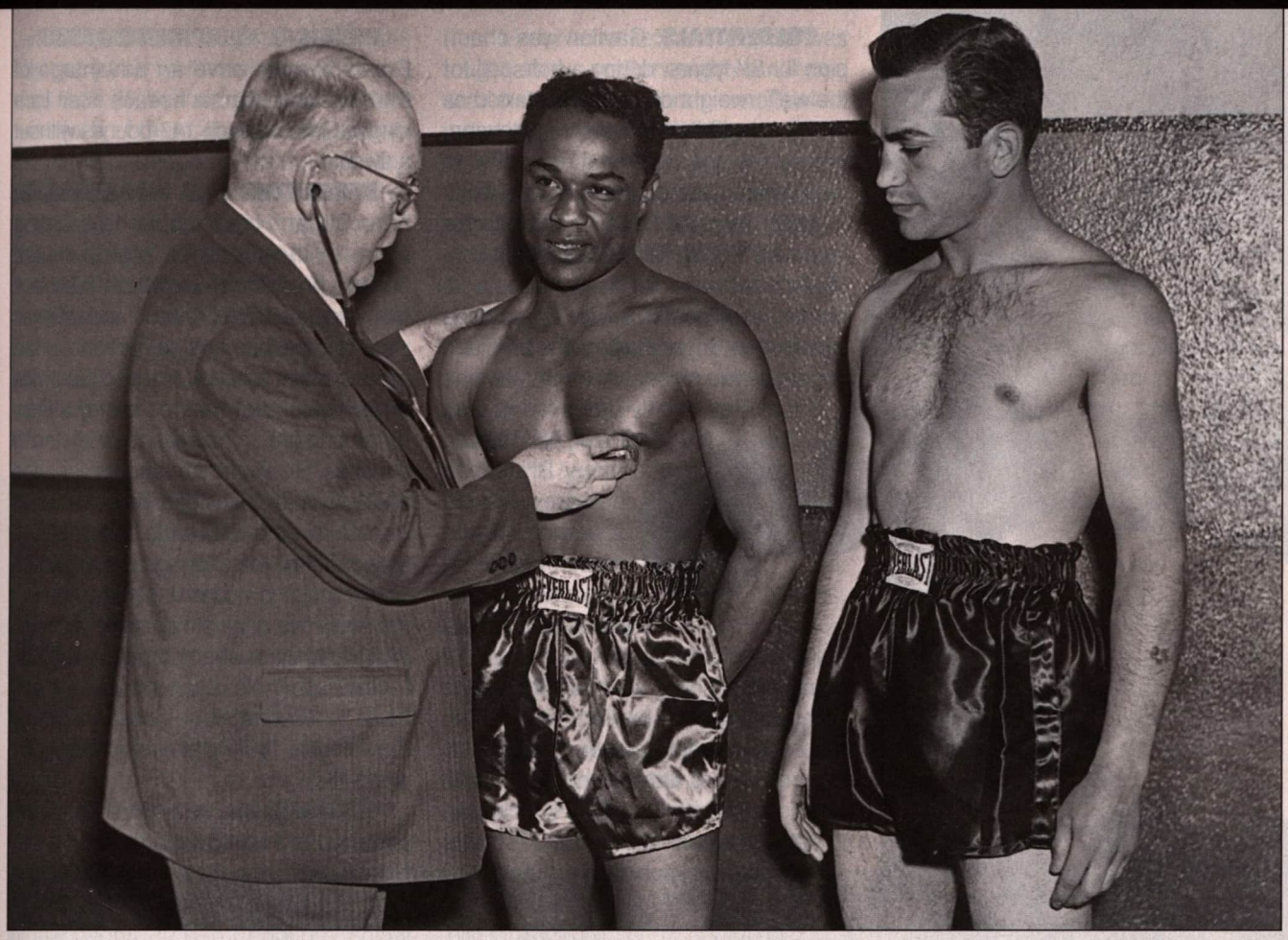
PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: The 5'11" Robinson would have a three-inch height advantage, but his reach of 72½" was only half-an-inch longer than Mayweather's. Robinson began to experience weight troubles over the final two years of his welterweight reign, when his peak fighting weight was around 155 pounds (Mayweather steps into the ring at around 152).

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: Robinson was a beautifully balanced boxer-puncher, his footwork and hand-speed dazzling, his timing and accuracy impeccable, and he could fight at any range. He had chilling power in his left hook and right cross, the ability to end a fight at any moment with one punch, and the instinct never to let a man off the hook. Like Mayweather, he had a good chin—dropped five times prior to moving up, but only twice by welterweights. His defense was fundamentally sound, but he took far more punches than, say, Willie Pep or Mayweather. Watch films of Sugar Ray at his peak and you may be surprised how many punches he absorbed. He did not much like boxers with slick skills and top-class jabs (Tommy Bell and Gavilan gave him trouble). Pretty Boy Floyd is a defensive master—very difficult to tag cleanly, even up-close where his trick of raising his shoulder and twisting his body is highly effective. He would have a significant edge in defense, but the busier, harder hitting, more aggressive Robinson would have a big edge in offense.

OUTCOME: This would be a very tough fight for Robinson. Mayweather is extremely slippery and his punch placement is often perfect, so he would slip and land frequently. But Sugar Ray's foot and hand speed would mean that his success rate would be far higher than with any other Mayweather opponent. Over 15 rounds, Robinson's aggression and work rate would secure him a close but unanimous decision.



Mayweather vs. Henry Armstrong



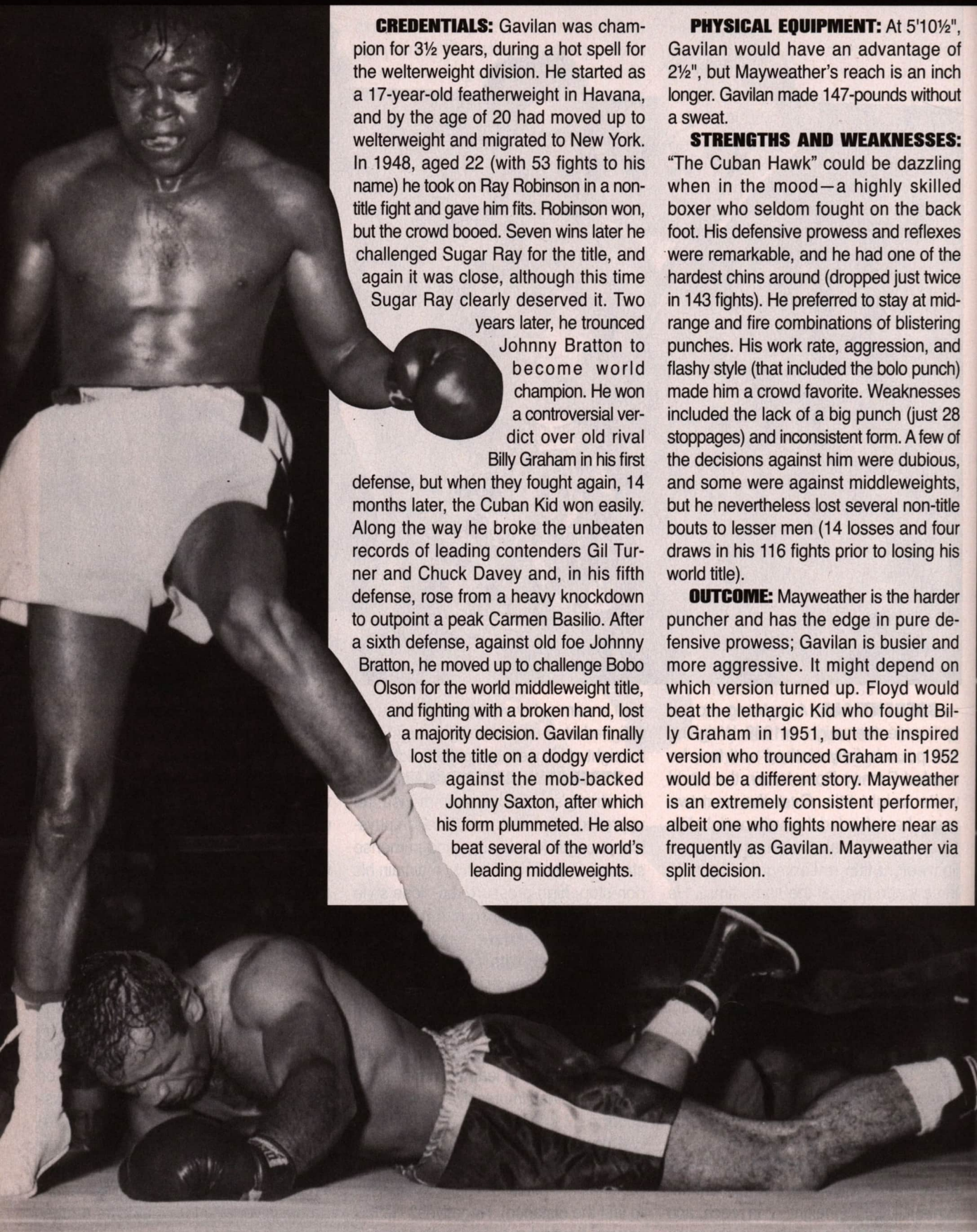
CREDENTIALS: Armstrong moved up from featherweight in 1938. Weighing 133 pounds fully clothed and fed, he mauled Barney Ross to win the world welterweight title. Over the next two years, he defended the welterweight title 18 times, while also winning the world lightweight title (meaning that he held three world titles at the same time). He was robbed in a bid for a version of the middleweight crown against Ceferino Garcia, who escaped with a draw. Armstrong burnt out quickly and lost the title to Fritzie Zivic, who also beat him in a rematch (though "Homicide Hank" won their third bout). The division was weak at the time, but Armstrong beat some good welterweights along the way including Ross, Garcia, Zivic, Ernie Roderick, and Pedro Montanez.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: "Money Mayweather" would have significant advantages, 2½" in height, 5" in reach, and 10 to 15 pounds in fighting weight, even with a same day weigh-in (Armstrong weighed at or under the lightweight limit for eight of his welterweight title fights).

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: Armstrong's assets were immense: an unprecedented work rate, freakish physical strength for his size, and immense stamina that allowed him to maintain his non-stop, high-pressure, up-close style for 15 rounds. He also had the speed and skill to close down fleet-footed opponents, along with quick hands and reflexes, good head movement, and, in his prime, an impervious chin. He would swarm all over bigger men, battering their bodies and raking their heads with a non-stop tattoo of leather. In the lighter weights, he had impressive power (once scoring 27 knockouts in a row), but at welterweight most stoppages came through the accumulation of fast, solid punches (14 of his 18 challengers failed to last the distance). Negatives? He lost several bouts due to foul tactics (mainly low blows) and his all-night partying and heavy drinking contributed to an early decline. His style meant that he took a lot of punishment, particularly since he was fighting almost once a month as champion (23 fights in 26 months).

OUTCOME: Armstrong struggled with the precision and skill of Lou Ambers at lightweight (but deserved both decisions); Mayweather struggled with the pressure of Jose Luis Castillo at lightweight (but won both decisions). Armstrong's speed, pressure, work rate, and ability to cut off the ring would give Mayweather headaches, but Floyd is also a master in-fighter and, as he showed against Hatton, has the strength and skill to defuse or tie-up relentless, close-quarter attacks. He couldn't match Armstrong's work rate, but he would land a far higher percentage of punches. In the end, Mayweather's advantages in size and defensive skill would be decisive, and he would win a fairly close but clear decision.

Mayweather vs. Kid Gavilan



CREDENTIALS: Gavilan was champion for 3½ years, during a hot spell for the welterweight division. He started as a 17-year-old featherweight in Havana, and by the age of 20 had moved up to welterweight and migrated to New York. In 1948, aged 22 (with 53 fights to his name) he took on Ray Robinson in a non-title fight and gave him fits. Robinson won, but the crowd booed. Seven wins later he challenged Sugar Ray for the title, and again it was close, although this time Sugar Ray clearly deserved it. Two years later, he trounced Johnny Bratton to become world champion. He won a controversial verdict over old rival Billy Graham in his first defense, but when they fought again, 14 months later, the Cuban Kid won easily. Along the way he broke the unbeaten records of leading contenders Gil Turner and Chuck Davey and, in his fifth defense, rose from a heavy knockdown to outpoint a peak Carmen Basilio. After a sixth defense, against old foe Johnny Bratton, he moved up to challenge Bobo Olson for the world middleweight title, and fighting with a broken hand, lost a majority decision. Gavilan finally lost the title on a dodgy verdict against the mob-backed Johnny Saxton, after which his form plummeted. He also beat several of the world's leading middleweights.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: At 5'10½", Gavilan would have an advantage of 2½", but Mayweather's reach is an inch longer. Gavilan made 147-pounds without a sweat.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: "The Cuban Hawk" could be dazzling when in the mood—a highly skilled boxer who seldom fought on the back foot. His defensive prowess and reflexes were remarkable, and he had one of the hardest chins around (dropped just twice in 143 fights). He preferred to stay at mid-range and fire combinations of blistering punches. His work rate, aggression, and flashy style (that included the bolo punch) made him a crowd favorite. Weaknesses included the lack of a big punch (just 28 stoppages) and inconsistent form. A few of the decisions against him were dubious, and some were against middleweights, but he nevertheless lost several non-title bouts to lesser men (14 losses and four draws in his 116 fights prior to losing his world title).

OUTCOME: Mayweather is the harder puncher and has the edge in pure defensive prowess; Gavilan is busier and more aggressive. It might depend on which version turned up. Floyd would beat the lethargic Kid who fought Billy Graham in 1951, but the inspired version who trounced Graham in 1952 would be a different story. Mayweather is an extremely consistent performer, albeit one who fights nowhere near as frequently as Gavilan. Mayweather via split decision.

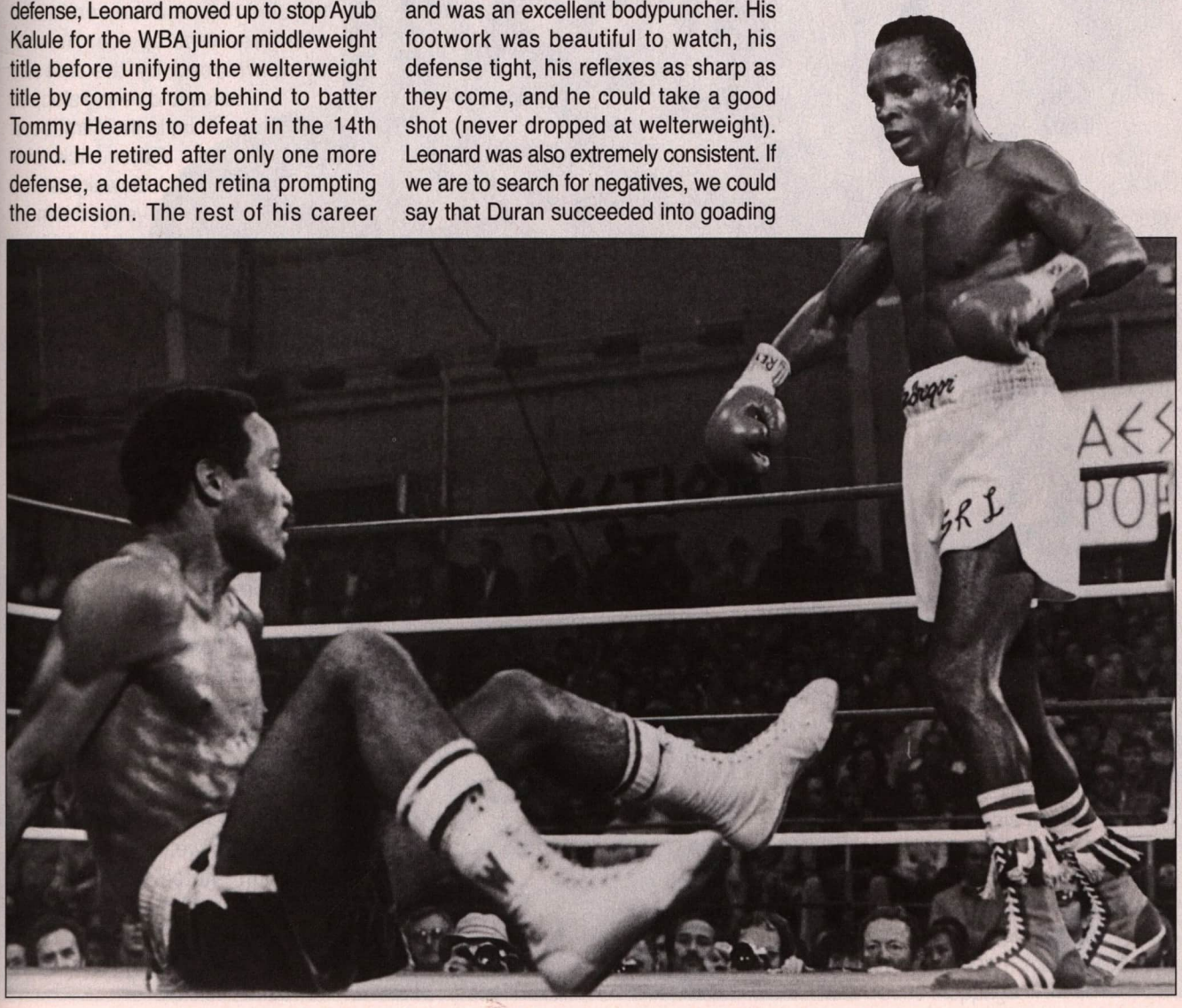
Mayweather vs. Sugar Ray Leonard

CREDENTIALS: Sugar Ray won the Olympic junior welterweight gold medal, and then picked up 25 welterweight wins (one of them, incidentally, against Floyd Mayweather Sr.) before breaking the unbeaten record of the defensive master Wilfred Benitez, dropping and then stopping him in the 15th to win the WBC belt. After knocking out the formidable Dave "Boy" Green in four rounds, Leonard looked set for a long reign. But in his second defense he went toe-to-toe with a rampant Roberto Duran and deservedly lost his title on a close unanimous decision. In the return, however, Sugar Ray danced and taunted, until "Hands Of Stone" ran out of ideas and patience, and pulled his "no mas" stunt in the eighth. After another defense, Leonard moved up to stop Ayub Kalule for the WBA junior middleweight title before unifying the welterweight title by coming from behind to batter Tommy Hearns to defeat in the 14th round. He retired after only one more defense, a detached retina prompting the decision. The rest of his career (four wins, two losses, and a draw) was fought above welterweight, but those wins over Hearns, Duran, and Benitez mean his credentials at 147-pounds are significantly better than Mayweather's, although the gap is not quite as wide as with Robinson, Armstrong, or Gavilan.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: Leonard would have a 2" advantage in both height and reach and is naturally a bigger man than Mayweather. He never had weight trouble at a time of same-day weigh-ins.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: Leonard's blend of speed, skill, technique, power, versatility, ring intelligence, and killer instinct was unmatched in his era. He could box, he could brawl, carried knockout power in both hands, and was an excellent bodypuncher. His footwork was beautiful to watch, his defense tight, his reflexes as sharp as they come, and he could take a good shot (never dropped at welterweight). Leonard was also extremely consistent. If we are to search for negatives, we could say that Duran succeeded into goading him into a brawl, Hearns outboxed him for long spells, and Benitez frequently made him miss. But he eventually got the better of all these men.

OUTCOME: Mayweather, a far more cautious boxer than Leonard, is one of the few who could match Sugar Ray's speed, reflexes, and footwork, and surpass his defensive skills (in fact, his defense is better than even Benitez'). Leonard, however, was bigger, busier, more aggressive, and carried significantly more power. Mayweather would succeed in befuddling him for long stretches, but if he could only squeak home against Oscar De La Hoya (admittedly at junior middle), it would not be quite enough against Sugar Ray. Leonard wins a unanimous decision.

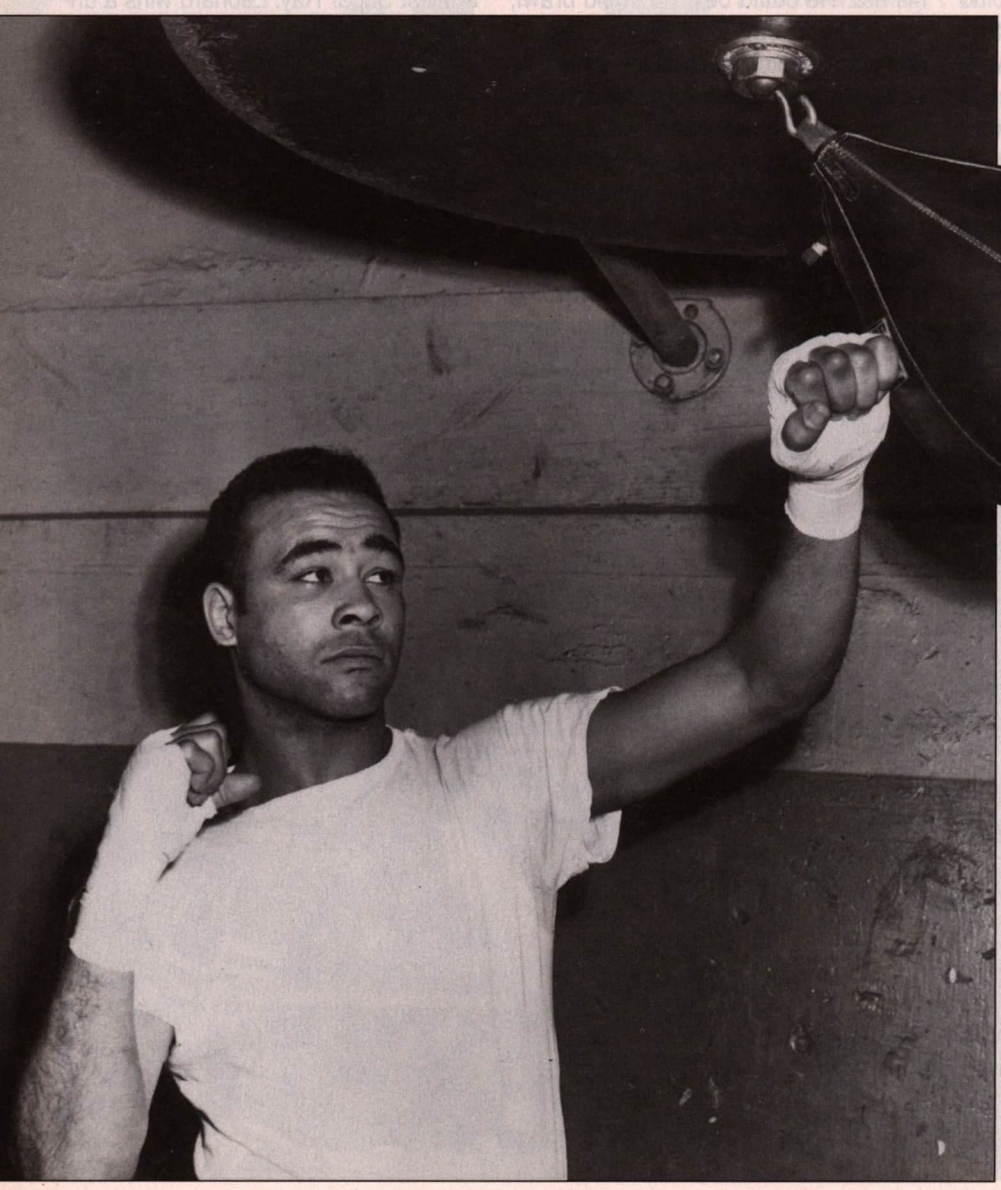


Mayweather vs. Charley Burley

CREDENTIALS: Burley is regarded as one of the finest middleweights of them all—the man who outclassed Archie Moore and was avoided by Ray Robinson. But he also had an outstanding welterweight run, coming in at between 145-150-pounds on 38 occasions. He turned professional at 19 and went 16-1 before losing a disputed split decision to top welterweight contender Fritzie Zivic, when he was just 20 years old. Burley avenged that three months later and also won their rubber match by a mile, but it was Zivic who got the title shot (beating Armstrong to become world champion). Instead, Burley had to be satisfied with the "Colored Welterweight Title" he won from the excellent Cocoa Kid, whom he dropped three times. The only welterweight on par with Burley was the highly skilled Holman Williams. In their first fight, in 1939, Burley scored three knockdowns, but Williams got the decision. In the rematch, in 1942, Burley prevailed. After that, he abandoned the 147-pound division and got the better of some of the world's best middleweights, light heavyweights, and one heavyweight (giving away 69-pounds to stop the 220-pound J.D. Turner).

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: Burley stood 5'9½" and for the first six years of his career seemed comfortable making welterweight. Even when he moved up, he was on the small side (151 pounds for his second fight with the 160-pound Ezzard Charles) and would happily have returned to 147 for a title shot.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: The only fight film of Burley (his win over the light heavyweight Oakland Billy Smith in 1946) shows him to be slippery, perfectly balanced, and extremely accurate with his overhand right. He was a precision puncher with impeccable timing and he owned one of the hardest chins in the game. Archie Moore, whom he dropped four times, described him as the finest he faced: "as slick as lard and twice as greasy."

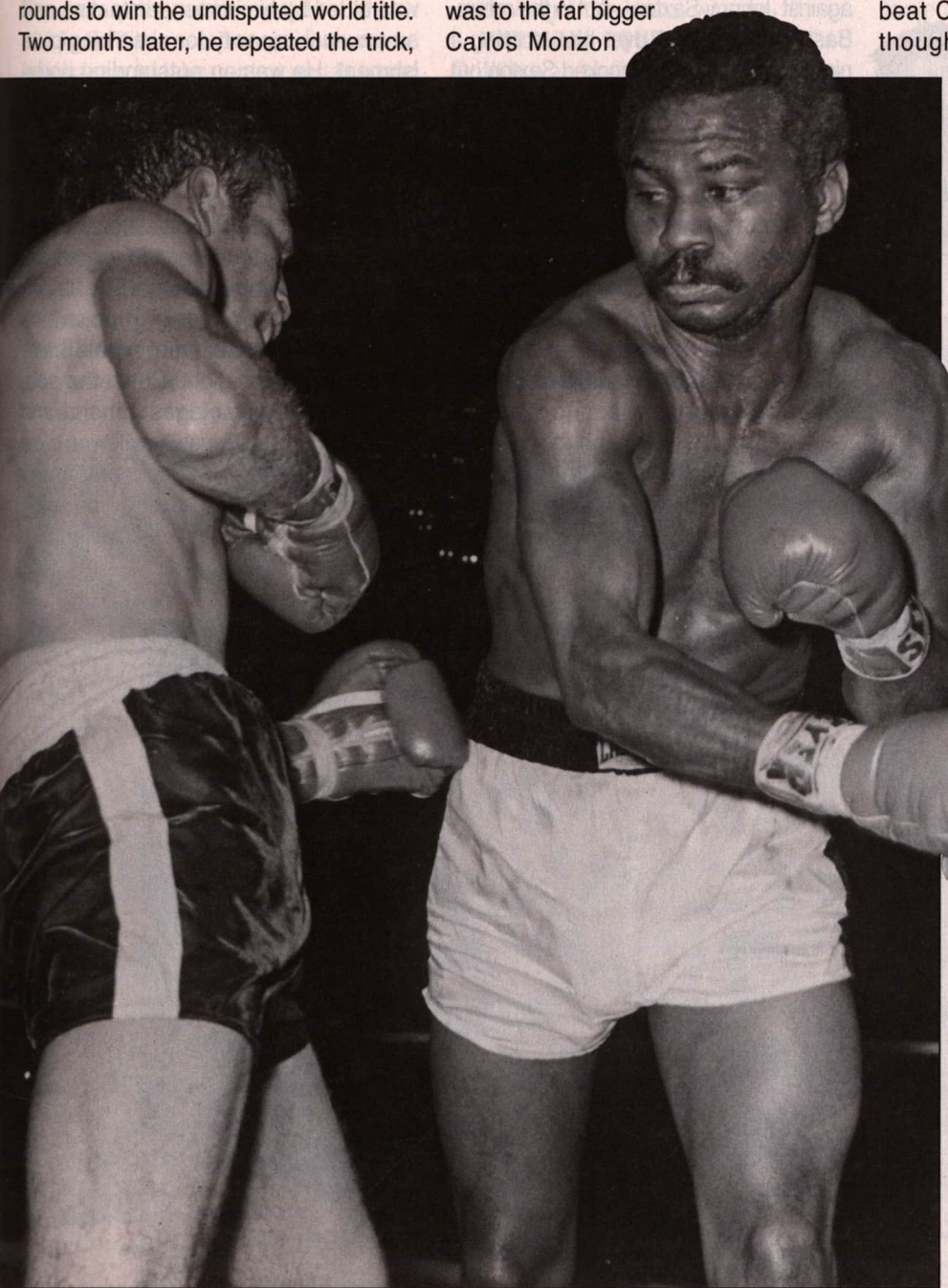


But Burley was not perfect. Highly skilled boxers such as Williams troubled him, and they ended up with three wins apiece. He was twice whipped by the speedy Charles and nearly stopped him in their first bout. Other slick middleweights who edged him included Lloyd Marshall and Jimmy Bivens. Like Mayweather, Burley had hand troubles, contributing to his third welterweight defeat against Jimmy Leto (later avenged).

OUTCOME: Burley mixed training with day jobs. For example, he took the Archie Moore gig at the last moment and completed his shift at an aircraft factory on the day of the fight. With time to train and a title at stake, he'd be even more formidable. Mayweather's speed and elusiveness would be troublesome, but it would not be enough (Charles, Bivens, and Marshall were big middleweights, not smallish welterweights). Burley could match Mayweather's defensive brilliance and hit significantly harder. He'd drop Floyd on his way to winning a close 15-round decision.

Mayweather vs. Jose Napoles

CREDENTIALS: Napoles turned professional in Cuba as a featherweight at the age of 18, after a 114-1 amateur career. Four years later, in 1962, he relocated to Mexico City and made his mark as one of the world's leading lightweights. But despite a string of victories over world rated lightweights and junior welterweights, he was denied a title shot. In 1968 Napoles moved to welterweight and eight months later knocked out Curtis Cokes in the 13th rounds to win the undisputed world title. Two months later, he repeated the trick, this time in 10 rounds, and then turned back the challenge of former world welterweight and middleweight champion Emile Griffith, dropping him in the third on his way to a wide decision victory. Napoles followed this with a 15-round TKO of Ernie Lopez, but lost the title on cuts in the fourth round against Billy Backus. He regained it six months later, pounding Backus to defeat in eight, and dominated his division for nearly five more years. His only loss in this period was to the far bigger Carlos Monzon (in seven rounds) when Napoles tried to win the world middleweight title. He finally lost the title in his 88th bout, at the age of 35, getting stopped in six by Britain's John H. Stracey. In all, he won 15 of his 17 world title bouts.



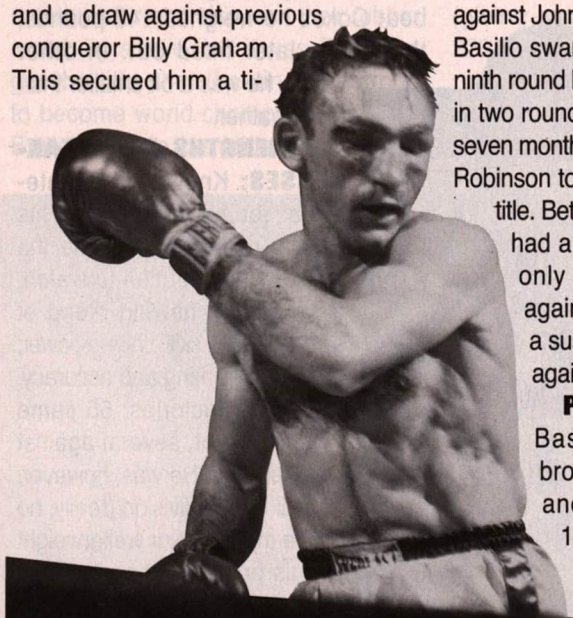
PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: Napoles stood 5'7½" (half an inch shorter than Mayweather) and had a 72-inch reach (the same as Mayweather). A year before winning the world title, he could still make lightweight, and when he beat Cokes he weighed 143 pounds, though he later filled out. In other words, he was a bit smaller than Mayweather.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: Known as "Mantequilla" (butter) because of his smooth, relaxed boxing style, the Cuban was beautiful to watch, a wonderful, flowing blend of superb boxing skill, chilling power, and perfect timing and accuracy. Of his 81 victories, 55 came via knockout, several against bigger men. He was, however, small for the division (really, no more than a junior welterweight in his prime), not particularly strong, and he had a tendency to cut (contributing to three of his defeats). His heavy-drinking lifestyle was one of the factors prompting his decline.

OUTCOME: This would be a magnificent bout for the connoisseur: two immensely gifted boxers testing their skills and power against each other. Mayweather is quicker than Napoles and is also a bit bigger and stronger, but "Mantequilla" hits harder. What gives Floyd the edge, however, is his greater fitness and dedication—and Napoles' fragile facial skin. After a close, tactical bout, look for Mayweather's slashing punches to carve up the Cuban, forcing a 14th-round stoppage.

Mayweather vs. Carmen Basilio

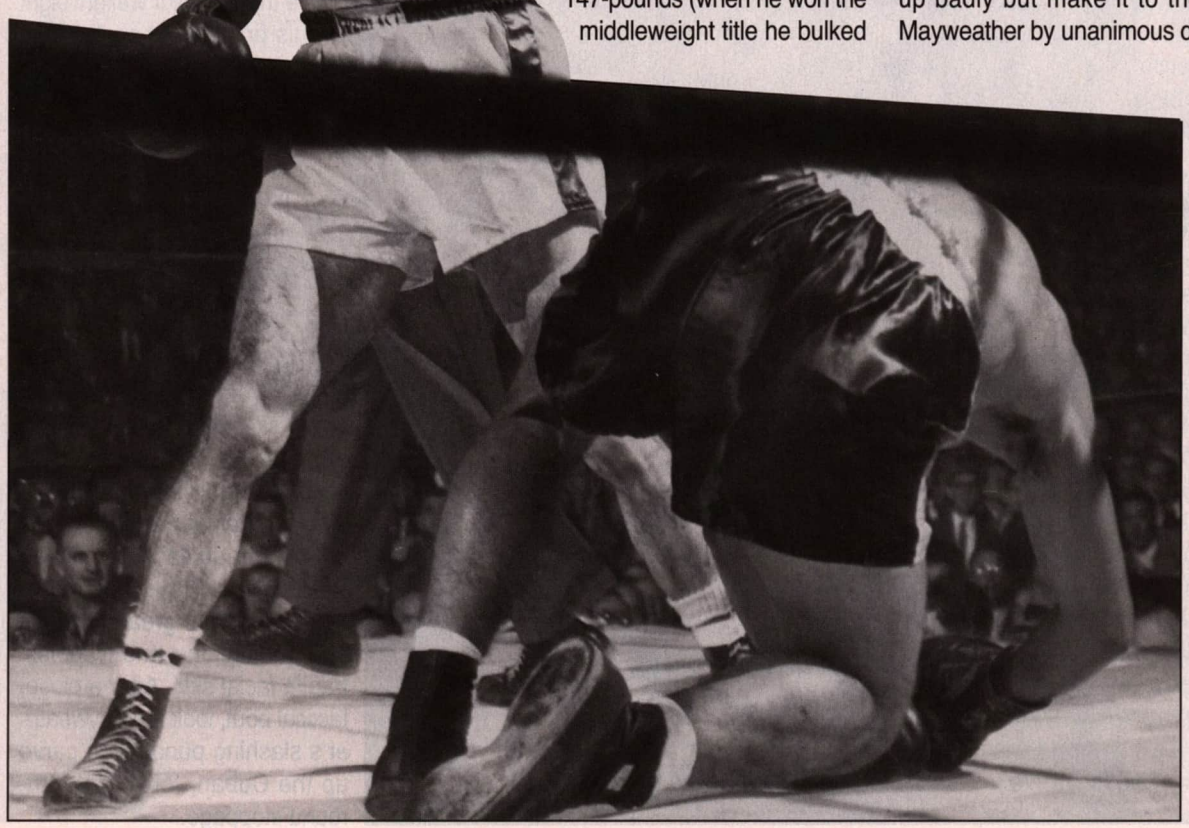
CREDENTIALS: Basilio is most famous for splitting two ferociously fought 15-rounders with Sugar Ray Robinson for the world middleweight title. But Basilio was at his best at welterweight, where he twice held the world title. He turned professional at 21 in 1948 and worked his way through the welterweight ranks as he learned his trade (mainly wins, but with a few losses and draws along the way). He hit his peak in his fifth professional year, with a win over Ike Williams and a win and a draw against previous conqueror Billy Graham. This secured him a title shot against Kid Gavilan, whom he dropped for a nine-count in the second round, only to lose a split decision. It took two years before Basilio was granted a second title shot, and he overcame a rocky start to stop Tony DeMarco in 12. In the rematch, the pattern was repeated in another thriller, with Basilio's body attack draining De Marco, who, again, was stopped in 12. The Canastota, New York, onion farmer lost the title in his second defense—a dubious decision against Johnny Saxton—but in the return, Basilio swarmed all over him, scoring a ninth round kayo. He knocked Saxton out in two rounds in their rubber match, and seven months later outpointed Sugar Ray Robinson to win the world middleweight title. Between 1952 and 1957, Basilio had a streak of 33 fights, and his only losses were a close one against the brilliant Gavilan and a suspicious one, twice avenged, against Saxton.



PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: Basilio was a short-armed broad-backed, chunky 5'6 ½" and had no trouble making 147-pounds (when he won the middleweight title he bulked up to 153½ pounds). Mayweather is 1½" inch taller, with a 6" reach advantage.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: Basilio was a swarming, heavy-handed brawler who was as gritty, courageous, and strong as they come. He fought by putting immense pressure on opponents, swarming all over them. Although he was better than adequate defensively, his main protection came through his incessant aggression. He was good at cutting off the ring and never stopped coming. This was aided by his immense stamina and an unusual capacity for absorbing punishment. He was an outstanding body-puncher, but he lacked chilling knockout power (25 stoppages in 79 bouts). Also, at the elite level, he took too many punches and marked up easily.

OUTCOME: Basilio was stronger than Mayweather and his non-stop aggression might cause some problems. The Italian-American would never give up, which would mean Mayweather would have an uncomfortable night. But in the end, Floyd's huge advantages in hand and foot speed and defensive skill would be too much for Basilio, who would mark up badly but make it to the final bell. Mayweather by unanimous decision.



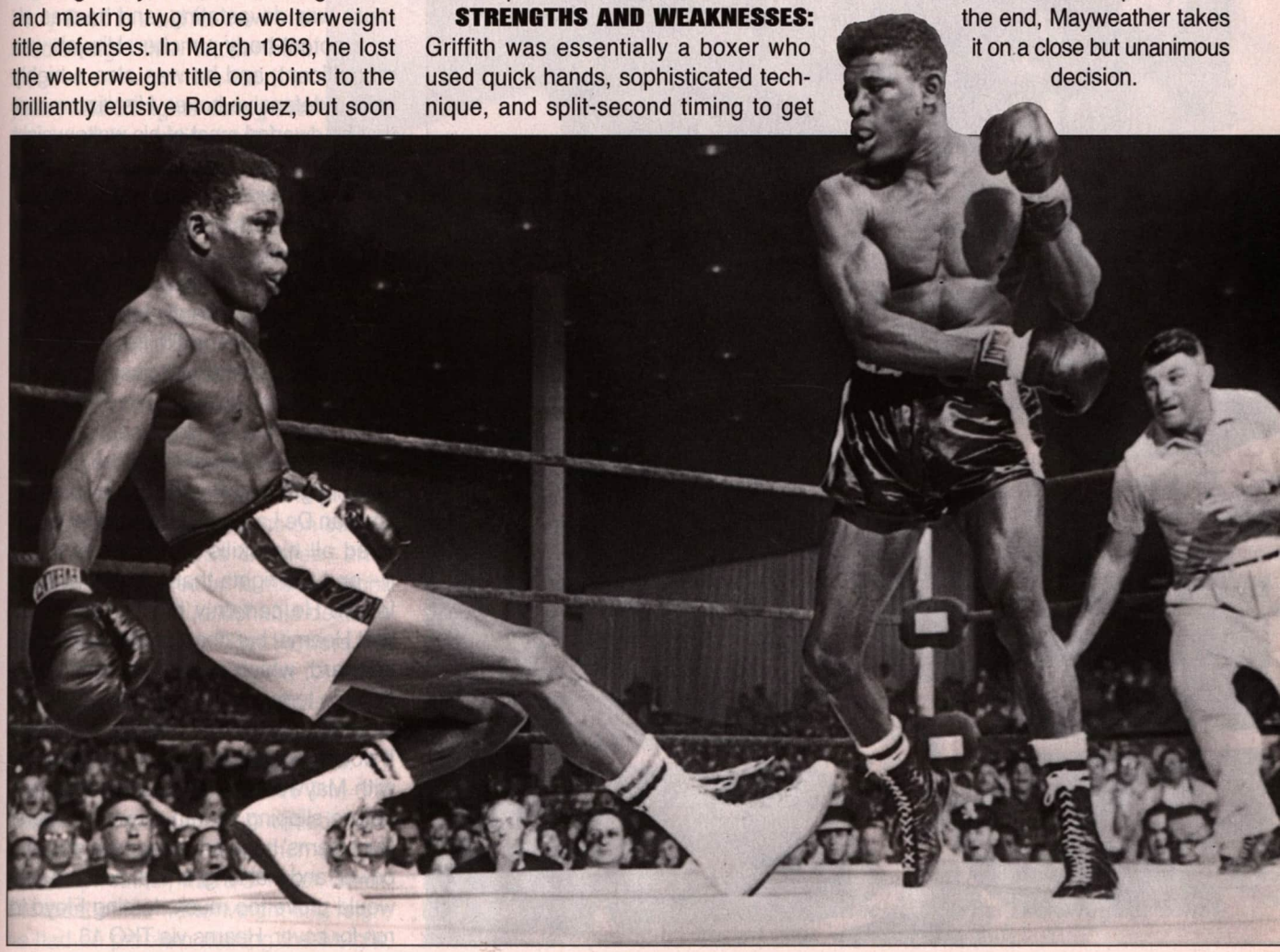
Mayweather vs. Emile Griffith

CREDENTIALS: Griffith turned professional in his adopted home of New York in 1958 and won his first 13 fights before dropping a split decision to middleweight Randy Sandy. Wins over leading welterweight contenders Florentino Fernandez, Jorge Jose Fernandez, Willie Toweel, and Luis Rodriguez secured him a title shot, and he knocked out Benny "Kid" Paret in 13. Five months later, in September 1961, Paret regained the title via split decision. This set up the rubber match in March 1962. Griffith rose from a sixth-round knockdown to take control and in round 12 pinned Parent to the ropes and rained an unanswered barrage of blows to the head. Paret went into a coma and died 10 days later. Griffiths never got over the tragedy, but fought seven times over the following year, including winning the junior middleweight title and making two more welterweight title defenses. In March 1963, he lost the welterweight title on points to the brilliantly elusive Rodriguez, but soon regained it, again via split decision, to become welterweight champion for the third time. Over the next two years he made four more defenses, including another split decision over Rodriguez. In 1966, he moved up to outpoint Dick Tiger for the middleweight title. After three years at middleweight, he dropped back down to welterweight, and weighing just 144½ pounds, challenged Jose Napoles for the welterweight title, only to lose widely on points. In all, he had 13 world welterweight title bouts, winning 10.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: At 5'7½", Griffith was half an inch shorter than Mayweather, but they had the same reach (72"). The broad-shouldered, deep-chested Virgin Islander looked like a middleweight, but never had trouble making the welterweight limit, and weighed just 150½ pounds when he won the 160-pound world title.

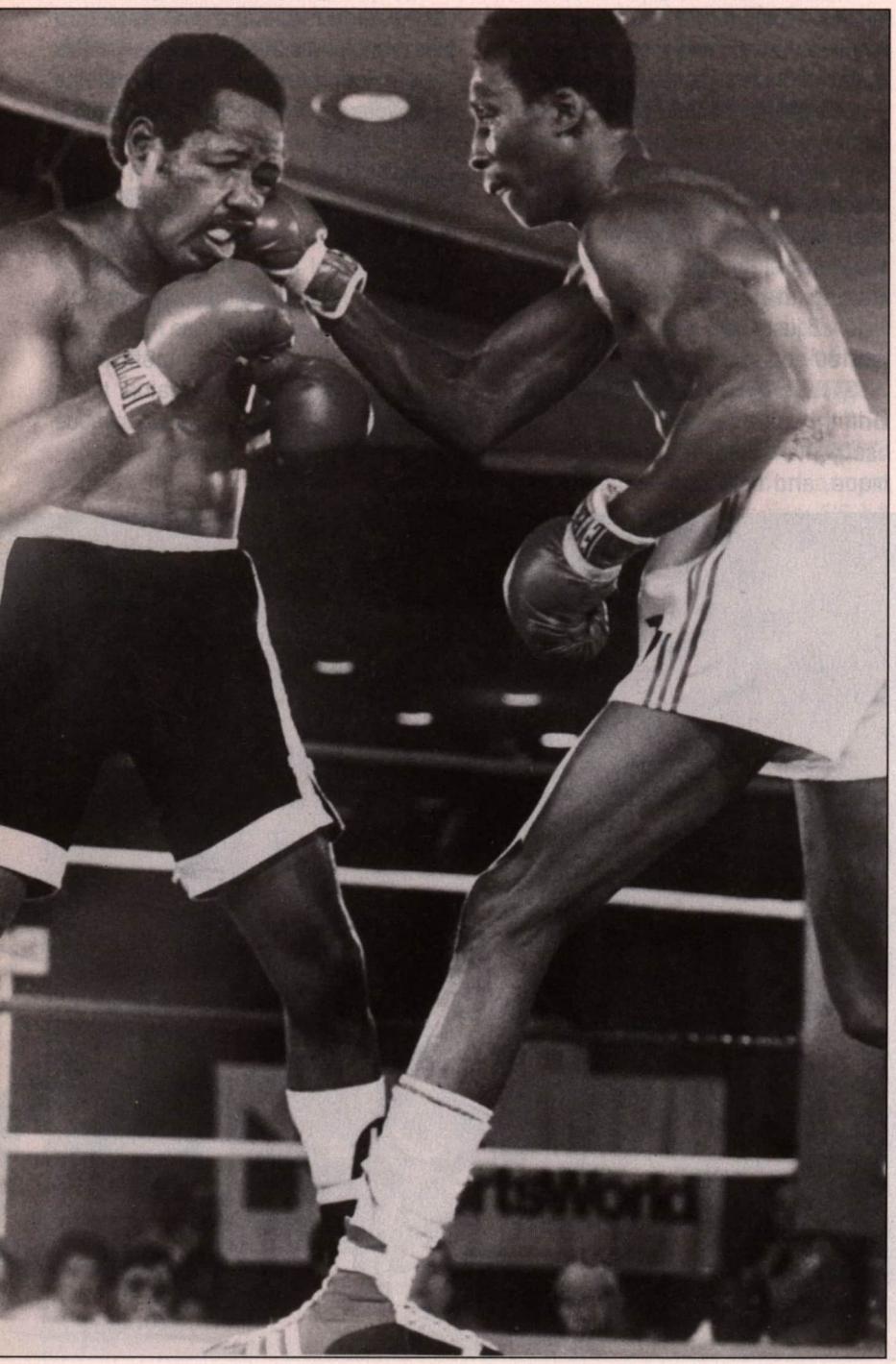
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: Griffith was essentially a boxer who used quick hands, sophisticated technique, and split-second timing to get results. He could work at any range and had an exceptionally tight defense. He was not a heavy puncher, but still stopped 40 percent of his welterweight opponents. Although twice knocked out at middleweight, he was never stopped at welterweight. He was good at everything without being brilliant in any one department. Griffith was weight-drained when he lost to Napoles, but in his prime, the welterweight opponent who gave him most trouble was the slick, slippery, fleet-footed Rodriquez (all three of Griffith's wins were via split decision; Rodriguez' win was via unanimous decision).

OUTCOME: Surprisingly, it is the slightly taller, considerably leaner Mayweather who is the puncher in this one. He's also just a bit quicker and more elusive, but Griffith's hand speed, versatility and superior work rate make most of the rounds competitive. In the end, Mayweather takes it on a close but unanimous decision.



Mayweather vs. Thomas Hearns

CREDENTIALS: "The Hitman" is hard to rate at welterweight. He saw off a trio of excellent 147-pound champions, outboxing Wilfred Benitez, flattening Roberto Duran, and getting the better of Sugar Ray Leonard in a drawn fight. But all of these were at higher weights. His welterweight record was 32-1 (30), but it's that single blemish (in the first Leonard fight) that everyone remembers. On his way up, he stopped former WBA titlist Angel Espada, future WBA junior welterweight titleholder Bruce Curry, and a few decent contenders. He looked immense in blasting out Pipino Cuevas for the WBA belt, but the Mexican is hardly regarded as one of the greats. Hearns marked time with three non-descript defenses, all ending inside the distance, before taking on Leonard. He had an outstanding 155-8 amateur career when he was known as a light-hitting defensive boxer, and he used these skills effectively, outboxing Sugar Ray for long periods. He was ahead on the scorecards when Leonard battered him to defeat in the 14th round. After that, Hearns moved up and won titles at junior middleweight, middleweight, and light heavyweight.



PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: The 6'1" Hearns is 5" taller than Mayweather, and outreaches him by 6". He was huge for a welterweight, with broad shoulders but skinny legs. Toward the end of his welterweight period, he struggled with weight and then made the mistake of coming in too light against Leonard (145-pounds).

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: Hearns was probably the hardest puncher in welterweight history. His right cross was devastating, and he was also a potent body puncher. His jab was magnificent, and he was also a highly skilled defensive boxer. His size meant that he dwarfed most of his welterweight opponents, and very few of them could find a way inside. Hearns' kryptonite was his jaw, although only Leonard exploited it at welterweight.

OUTCOME: Mayweather managed to get by other significantly taller men (like Diego Corrales and Philip Ndou), but never faced anyone with close to Hearns' combination of size, power, and boxing skill. Oscar De La Hoya succeeded in out-jabbing Mayweather in the first half of their fight, and Hearns had a far better jab than De La Hoya. Mayweather would need all his skills and guile to avoid it—and the rights that would inevitably follow. He certainly has the power to hurt Hearns, but does not hit as hard as Leonard, which means Hearns would be able to take more chances with full-blooded crosses and hooks to the body. It would be fascinating for several rounds, with Mayweather making Hearns miss before slipping in with sharp counters. But Hearns' huge advantages in size and power, and that long, sharp, accurate jab, would prove too much, forcing Floyd to run for cover. Hearns via TKO 13.

Mayweather vs. Mickey Walker

CREDENTIALS: The "Toy Bulldog" is best known as a great middleweight champion who went on to hold the prime Jack Sharkey to a draw, but his first six professional years (92 fights) were fought mainly at welterweight. The Irish-American street fighter turned professional at 18 and fought 22 times the first 12 months. In 1921, he was thrown in with world champion Jack Britton and was handily outboxed. But Walker continued to learn and had a second try 16 months later. This time the 144-pound Walker dropped Britton three times and romped home with a unanimous decision—part of a 29-fight unbeaten run that ended in 1925, when he lost to Harry Greb in a bid for the world middleweight title. Walker held the welterweight title for four years, had 32 fights during that time, and is credited with six successful title defenses (some of them NBA version only). Among the top welterweights he bettered were Pete Latzo, Lew Tendler, and Dave Shade, and he also won a newspaper decision over Mike McTigue in a no-decision bout for the world light heavyweight title. In 1926, he came in out of shape and lost his title to Latzo, who used his skill and movement to prevail. That was followed by a loss on cuts to future champion Joe Dundee, after which Walker moved up to middleweight, winning a highly questionable decision over world champion Tiger Flowers. He was middleweight champion for three years and twice lost split decisions for the world light heavyweight title. He also beat several top heavyweight contenders.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT: The 5'7' Walker was a squat, short-armed, powerfully built man, and an inch shorter than Mayweather, with a 5" reach deficit. For most of his welterweight title reign, he had no problem making the weight, and he came in at just 149¾ pounds when he fought McTigue for the light heavyweight title.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES: The Toy Bulldog looks like a modern fighter on film. He kept pressing forward, crouching to get inside, and he liked working up-close, throwing heavy bodyblows, some going astray (three disqualification losses in his early years). He was exceptionally strong, brave, and heavy-handed, with a vicious left hook and a sturdy chin, although he sometimes sustained cuts. He developed a bob and weave style to avoid punches, but occasionally could be outboxed at the elite level, as Greb, Latzo, and Dundee showed. His partying life also contributed to his title loss in 1926.

OUTCOME: Walker would attack relentlessly, throwing bombs while regularly getting warned for low blows. Mayweather would fight in retreat, trying to pick him off with sharp counters, but would struggle to keep Walker at bay. In the end, however, Mayweather's superior speed and skills would prove decisive. His sharp punches would open up cuts around Walker's eyes, prompting a 10th-round stoppage. ■

Gavin Evans is a London-based freelance writer and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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"SUITCASE SAM" SILVERMAN

The Man Who Outfoxed Sugar Ray

By Don Stradley

Sam Silverman had a plan, and it involved putting Sugar Ray Robinson in the window of Raymond's department store in downtown Boston.

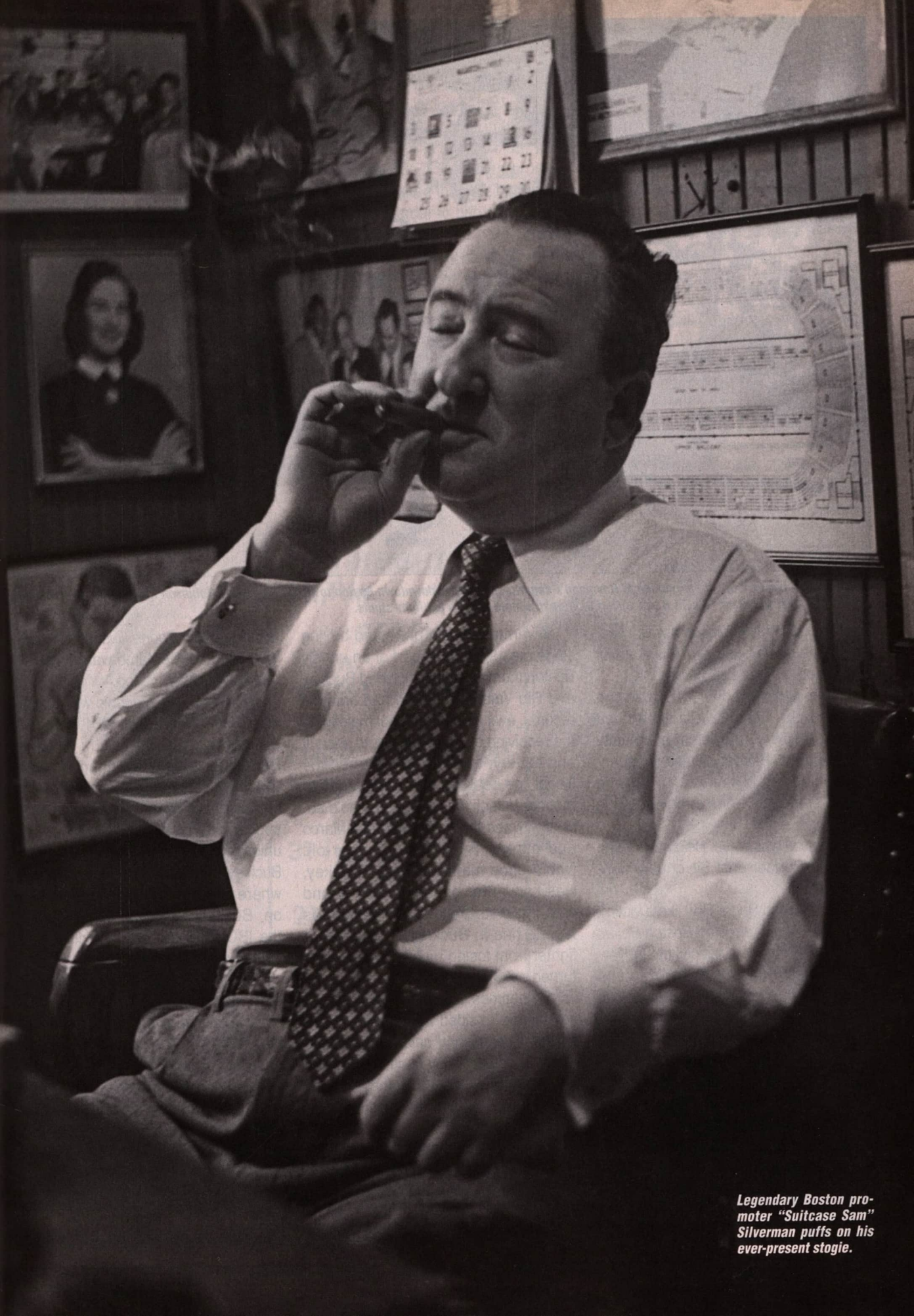
This was during the early weeks of 1960. Robinson was in training for his upcoming Boston Garden bout with Paul Pender, a local middleweight who had only recently quit his job with the Brookline fire department. At Silverman's request, Raymond's storefront had been converted into a makeshift gym, although "makeshift" was a kind word. The only ring available was a sorry piece of antiquary with ropes so loose that Robinson and his sparring partners were forced to stay in the middle of the ring. But even as Robinson stayed off the ropes, his trainers worried that the world's finest fighter might actually fall through the canvas. Passersby who stopped to gawk were encouraged to make donations to a local charity group, a small price to see the aging maestro at work. As former *Boston Globe* writer Bud Collins told THE RING, "There were traffic jams, people jams, all to see Ray."

They were looking at Robinson, but what they were seeing was Silverman's attempt to save boxing in Boston.

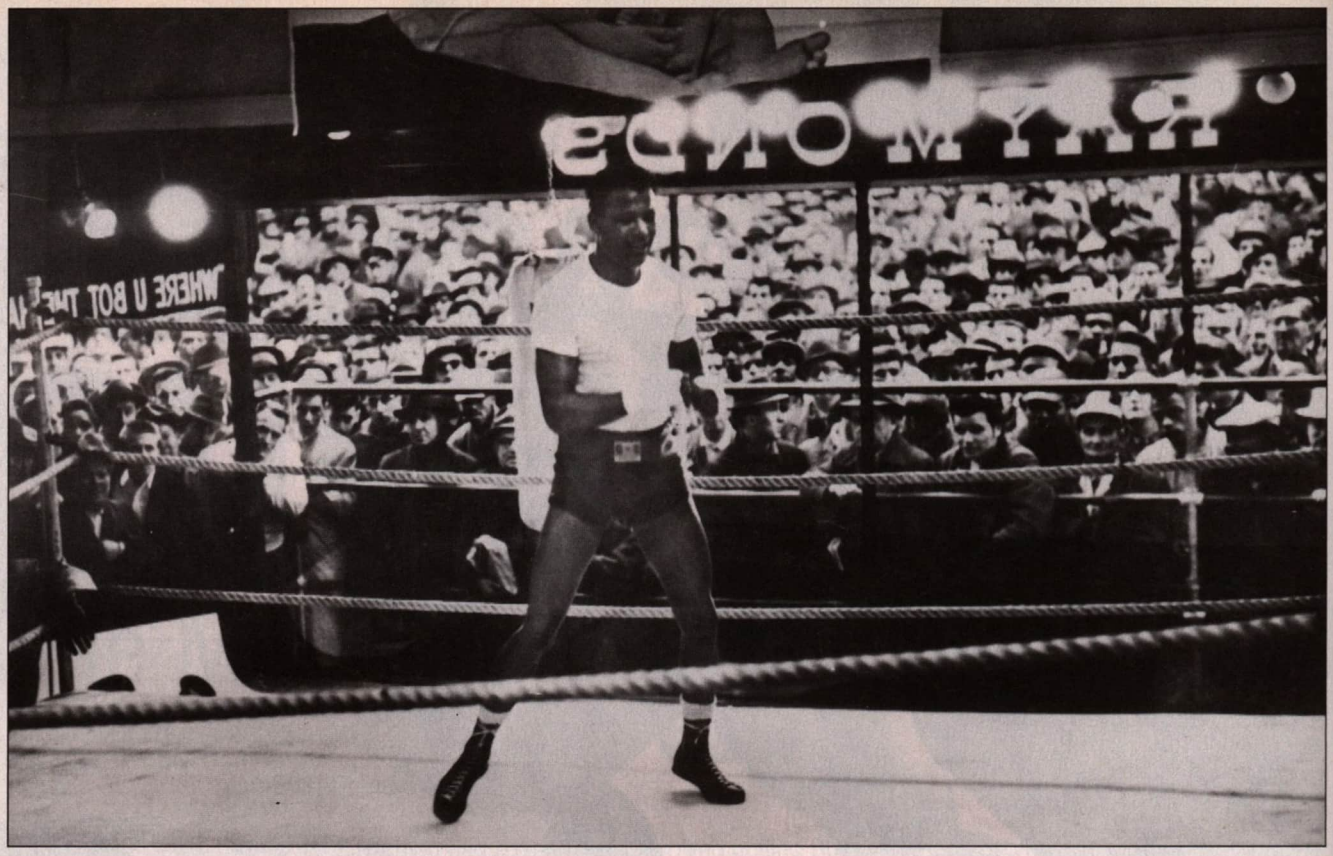
He was known as "Subway Sam," because he used the city's rickety subway system to shuttle from one arena to another, "Suitcase Sam," because he kept a suitcase filled with cash in the trunk of his car, "Sad Sam" because he never stopped complaining, and "Unsinkable Sam" because in a career spanning nearly four decades, 12,000 fights, many court battles, and at least two attempts on his life, Silverman stayed above water.

"Sam was a dreamer," remembered Tony DeMarco, the former welterweight champion who fought his greatest bouts under the Silverman banner. "It would be the end of the day, and everyone would be exhausted, but he'd still be dreaming up matches, thinking about the future."

The National Boxing Association had withdrawn recognition of Robinson as middleweight champion, but Robinson's title claim was still recognized in New York, Massachusetts, and most of the civilized world. To provincial, blue-collar Boston, Robinson must've seemed an exotic figure. He was a wealthy black athlete who traveled with his own hairdresser and bantered with his entourage in the French they'd picked up on their tours of Europe. That he was near 40 and training in a window where there'd previously been a display of winter raincoats may have



Legendary Boston promoter "Suitcase Sam" Silverman puffs on his ever-present stogie.



Large crowds jammed the street outside of Raymond's department store in downtown Boston to watch Sugar Ray Robinson shadow box in preparation for his title fight with Paul Pender. It was one of Silverman's more famous publicity stunts.

seemed odd, but Robinson always went where the money was, and this month it happened to be in Boston.

Raymond's window was also the scene of the weigh-in. Silverman had people ready with towels if any nudity was required. Pender's manager, Johnny Buckley, told the press, "These things should be done in private. This ain't Paris."

Robinson was blasé. He'd never even heard of Pender until Silverman mentioned him.

"Sam played Sugar Ray like a violin," said Tim Horgan, a retired *Boston Herald* reporter. "He made a special trip to New York to meet with Ray, and sold him on fighting Pender. Sam said, 'Pender isn't so great, and we'd really like to see you in Boston again.' He buttered Ray up."

Pender would say in a 1970 interview, "Sam Silverman, he probably is the smartest promoter in the country. He put me and Robinson together because Robinson thought I was a nothing. He fought me because he thought I was going to be a soft touch, and Silverman convinced him that I was going to be a soft touch."

Silverman, who'd promoted boxing since the 1930s, was part of an unholy Boston triumvirate that included Buckley and Rip Valenti. All three had criminal records, everything from bookmaking, to the receiving of stolen goods, to assault and battery; together they blurred the illegal line between managing and promoting. Valenti was a hustler who'd secretly owned the contracts of DeMarco and others. Buckley, a 70-year-old who'd once managed Jack Sharkey, was known for punching judges and creating disturbances at ringside. As legend has it, Buckley once saved a fighter from losing by having the lights turned out in the arena.

"Sometimes Sam sided with Valenti, sometimes he sided with Buckley, whatever was necessary," said Collins. In DeMarco's words, "They controlled boxing in Boston for decades, but they couldn't promote a fight without pissing each other off."

Silverman and Valenti eventually fell out when Valenti delivered DeMarco to the IBC, the powerful New York group that monopolized boxing. Calling Valenti a glorified PR man with mob connections, Silverman told *Sports Illustrated* in 1957, "Getting rid of DeMarco was worth it if it got me rid of Valenti too."

Silverman's relationship with Buckley was no less heated. In 1951, after Pender lost a decision to Joe Rindone, Buckley accused Silverman of rigging the judges. Silverman responded by knocking Buckley's spectacles flying through the smoke-filled Garden air. The union was further complicated because Buckley owned the soot-stained building where Silverman had his office. Later on, Buckley began running fights for the IBC's Boston arm, which irritated Silverman all the more.

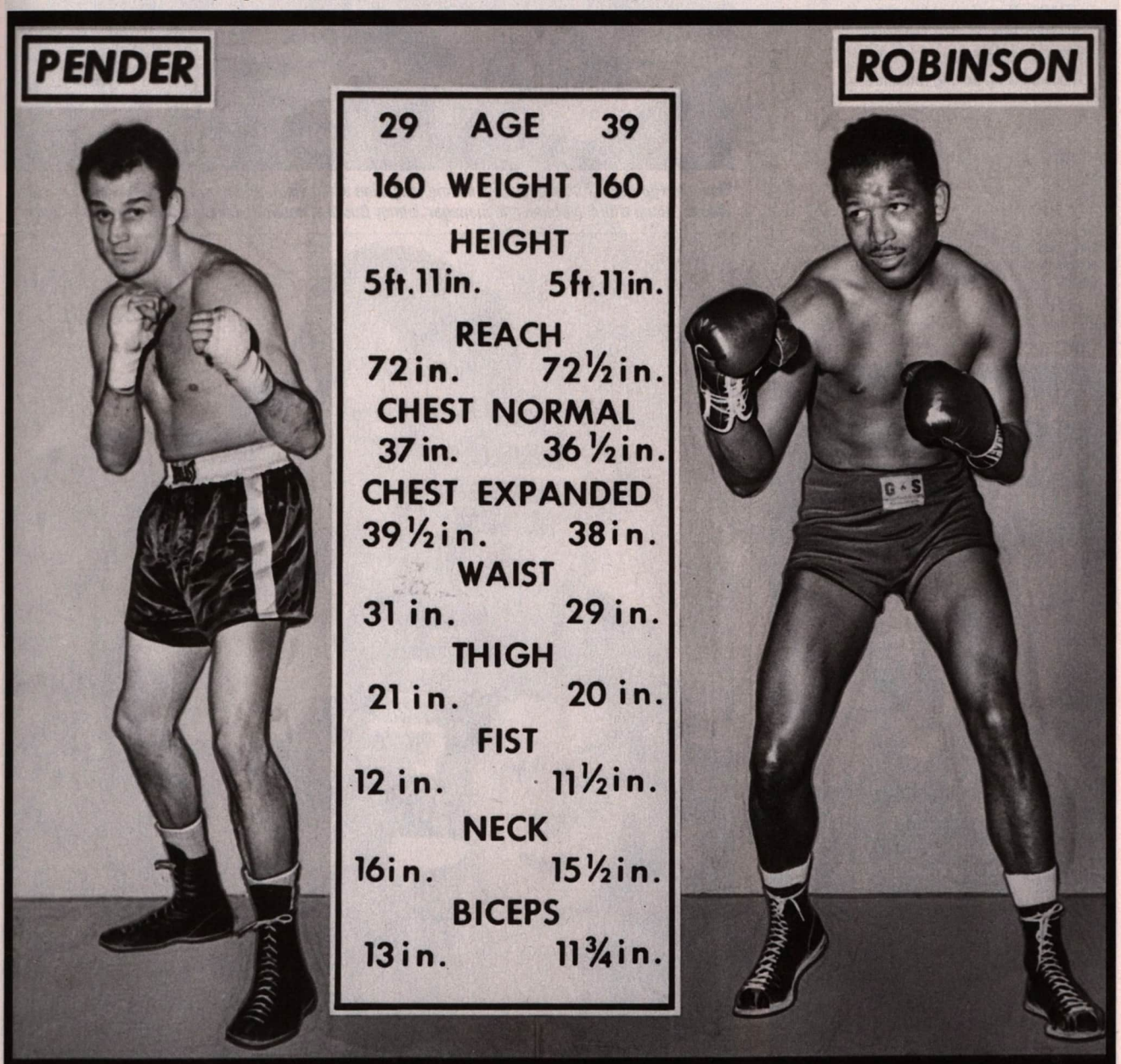
"No one loved boxing as much as Sam did," said Collins. "He thought all other sports were ridiculous. Every dime he made went right back into the business. His wife watched the box office, and carried a little valise with the night's receipts. Sam lived on the edge; all he needed was a couch, a TV set, his Cadillac, and a couple of suits. Everything else was boxing."

Silverman's great love came with a price. In 1948 he was slugged in a restaurant by an unidentified goon wearing

brass knuckles. In 1951 a gunman fired a bullet through his living room window, nearly hitting Silverman's wife, Helen, and in 1954, four bombs went off outside his Chelsea home, shattering the windows and shaking up the entire neighborhood. From then on, Silverman often asked one of his lackeys to start his car for him, fearing there might be a stick of dynamite under the hood. Another of Silverman's associates, Hall of Fame trainer Ray Arcel, was hospitalized after being attacked by a pipe-wielding thug outside the Garden. The assaults were believed to be the work of New York hoods trying to muscle in on the TV revenue of Silverman's Boston fights.

The IBC's policy of televising bouts with a minimum of local blackouts was a constant knife in Silverman's back. "Boston Garden is a fight club, not a television studio," Silverman growled. He eventually sued the IBC, but found it increasingly harder to bring top fighters to Boston. The man who called himself "the last of the independents" found himself presiding over a city that had become a boxing backwater.

Silverman had other beefs, even with the Garden itself. Every kid in Boston knew a dozen ways into the building until, as Collins once wrote, "They were packed in tighter than galley slaves." Older Bostonians still talk about paying off the local cops working security. Give five bucks to the right cop, and you could see a championship fight. Silverman claimed the paying customers barely outnumbered the sneak-ins. Another Silverman gripe involved his efforts to promote a heavyweight title fight in Boston. He had promoted 32 of Rocky Marciano's bouts, but once Marciano became champion, Silverman couldn't get near him. Most thought Robinson-Pender would prove just as futile.



Robinson had never even heard of Pender until Silverman persuaded him to put the middleweight title on the line in Boston by downplaying Pender's ability. "Silverman convinced him that I was going to be a soft touch," said Pender.

The RING

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Manager Rip Valenti flips through a boxing magazine while visiting Silverman, who is busy at his desk. Valenti, along with Silverman and manager Johnny Buckley, controlled boxing in Boston for decades.

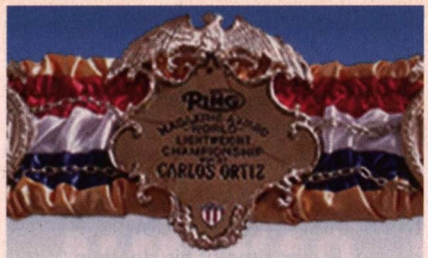
Silverman's wife poses with Pender during the build-up to the Robinson fight. She was lucky not to be killed when a gunman fired a bullet through the window of their home that just missed her.

"No one thought the fight would happen," said Collins. "Robinson kept asking for 'walking around' money, so Sam borrowed from everybody. He even borrowed from Pender's wife's uncle. And he kept lying to Robinson, telling him there'd be all kinds of TV money coming in. It was right out of *Guys & Dolls*—Sam with his big cigar, conning Robinson. Putting him in Raymond's window was evidence that Sam had pulled it off. He wanted everyone to know Robinson was in Boston, and the fight was on."

And it was a stinker. Pender won a dull split decision, and the majority of ringside writers felt Robinson had been robbed. The controversy spawned a rematch six months later, also in Boston with Silverman promoting. Pender won again by split decision. And just like that, Robinson was gone, and the raincoats were put back in the store window.

Pender never became the attraction Silverman had hoped for. After beating a faded Carmen Basilio, and winning two of three over Terry Downs, Pender retired. By the time of his death in 2003, he was little more than a footnote to Robinson's career.

The Pender-Robinson fight turned out to be a stinker, but the split decision was in Pender's favor, even though most of the ringside reporters thought the aging Sugar Ray had done enough to retain the title. The rematch also ended in a split decision win for Pender.



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Buckley died in 1963. Not one to go gently into that good night, 74-year-old Buckley was arrested not long before his death for attacking his partially paralyzed son-in-law with a club.

Valenti died at 84 in 1986, just nine months after securing the closed circuit theater rights for New England showings of the Marvin Hagler-Tommy Hearns bout. He made a couple of million bucks on that one.

Meanwhile, Silverman soldiered on throughout the 1960s, sometimes promoting three shows in a single night. Silverman had the second Muhammad Ali-Sonny Liston bout all sewn up for Boston, but when circumstances sent the bout to Maine, Silverman was no longer attached, his goal of promoting a heavyweight title fight dashed again.

In 1968, Silverman was arrested by the FBI for allegedly bribing a fighter to lose. The court case lasted nearly two years before ending in a mistrial. Pender acted as a character witness, vouching that Silverman was an "honest" individual.

Silverman, still full of dreams, stayed busy until the July night in 1977 when he was killed in a car accident. He was 64.

"That was the end of boxing in Boston," said Collins. "No one could fill Sam's role."

Everyone had a favorite Silverman story, like the time he brought a seven-foot South African fighter named Ewart Potgieter to the Valley Arena in Holyoke, Massachusetts, only to see him lose, or the time he went to The World Series in 1946 and fell asleep, or

Sad but wiser: A bemused Robinson speaks with reporters following his loss to Pender. By then he must have realized that Silverman had conned him into believing that Pender was no threat to take the title.

the time he told Hagler to forget being a southpaw, because lefties were never successful. There was also the time he referred to Chico Vejar as "undefeated," when a check of *The Ring Record Book* revealed otherwise.

"He lied to me all the time. He was the great prevaricator," said Collins. But the ultimate Silverman story involved Robinson, and according to Horgan, there was more to it.

"Sam was married to this very nice girl, a former showgirl, Helen," Horgan explained. "They were crazy about each other. She went with him to New York. She kept telling him, 'Don't give Ray Robinson too much money.' Well, what she didn't know was that Sam had cleaned out their entire savings to give to Robinson as a sort of down payment on the purse. Robinson was like that—you had to give him money just to take a meeting with him. But that didn't necessarily mean he'd agree to fight. Sam gave Ray every cent he and his wife had saved. And she found out. She was so angry she got on a plane and flew back to Boston without Sam.

"Sam got in his car and drove like a maniac to reach Boston before her plane landed. He was doing it just to get at her, you know. Somehow, he got back to their house before she did. She walks in and he's sitting on the couch, smoking a cigar. He said, 'Hi, honey. I got Robinson!'"

The year after his two fights with Robinson, Pender successfully defended the title against ex-champ Carmen Basilio. Silverman is pictured getting ready to drop a handkerchief to start an arm-wrestling match between the pair.

Rose Pender places a paper crown on her husband's head a few days after he beat Robinson. Although he beat Sugar Ray again in a rematch, Pender never became the big star Silverman envisioned.

It was a Damon Runyon scene, but instead of having a colorful Broadway backdrop, Silverman was part of gray old Boston, where boxing died a slow death. Not even his great love could keep the sport afloat. The Celtics and the Bruins became the new heroes of the Garden. Valenti and DeMarco had streets named after them, while Silverman faded from memory. There was a time, though, in January of 1960, when the clerks at Raymond's cleared space for a boxing ring, downtown Boston sizzled like Times Square, and Suitcase Sam was the biggest player in the game. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to The Ring.

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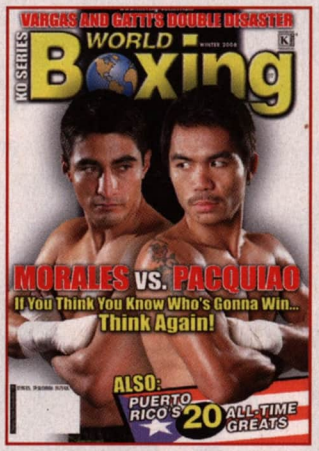

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Heavyweights

David Haye W 12 Nicolay Valuev
(Wins WBA Title)
John Ruiz KO 7 Adnan Serin
Sergei Liakhovich KO 1 Jeremy Bates
Chauncy Welliver W 12 Seiaute Mailata
Gonzalo Basile KO 8 Saul Farah
Sam Sexton KO 6 Martin Rogan
Rob Calloway KO 5 Clinton Boldridge
Tomasz Adamek KO 5 Andrew Golota
Vladimir Virchis W 6 Edgars Kalnars
Francois Botha W 12 Pedro Carrion
Oliver McCall W 10 Lance Whitaker
Murad Khalidov W 10 Remigijus Ziausys
Ray Austin KO 4 DaVarryl Williamson
Denis Bakhtov KO 4 Sherzod Mamajanov
Jason Barnett KO 3 John Poore
Tye Fields KO 3 Galen Brown
Attila Levin KO 3 Leri Okhanashvili
Elijah McCall KO 2 Reginald Jackson

Cruiserweights

Zsolt Erdei W 12 Giacobbe Fragomeni
(Wins WBC Title)
Victor Barragan KO 7 Arthur WIlliams
Cesar Crenz KO 5 Orlando Farias
Mateusz Masternak KO 5 Lukasz Janik

Light Heavyweights

Chad Dawson W 12 Glen Johnson
Joey Spina D 12 Lou Del Valle
Isaac Chilemba W 12 Doudou Ngumbu
Byron Mitchell KO 2 David Telesco
Dawid Kostecki W 10 Gregory Soszynski
Vyacheslav Uzelkov KO 5 Tomas Adamek
Walter Ramallo KO 7 Job Mazeo
Soulan Pownceby KO 4 Faimasasa Tavui
Tamas Kovacs KO 3 Gyula Gaspar

Super Middleweights

Andre Ward Tech. Win 11 Mikkel Kessler
(Wins WBA Title)
Sebastien Demers W 12 Nicholson Poulard
Anthony Mundine W 10 Alejandro Falliga
Edison Miranda KO 1 Francisco Sierra
Paul Smith W 12 Tony Quigley
Caleb Truax W 10 Kerry Hope
Matt Vanda W 10 Phil Williams
Piotr Wilczewski W 10 Demetrius Davis
Medhi Bouadla KO 8 Morrade Hakkar
Dimitri Sartison KO 5 Stjepan Bozic
Don George KO 4 Jason Naugler
Thomas Oosthuizen KO 4 Tshepang Mohale
Orlando Torres KO 2 Tomas Rodriguez

Middleweights

Daniel Geale W 12 Samir Barbosa
Peter Manfredo KO 1 Ronald Weaver
Andy Lee W 10 Affif Belghecham
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 10 Troy Rowland
Kreshnik Qato W 12 Fabio Liggieri
Jorge Heiland W 10 Orlando Torres
Darren McDermott W 10 Danny Butler
Thomas Troelenberg W 10 Marco Schulze
Tony Randell W 10 Kevin Concepcion
Hector Camacho Jr. W 10 Yory Boy Campas
Hassan N'Jikam W 10 Jeferson Goncalo
Ali Charles D 10 Martin Desjardins
Jose Zertuche KO 7 Jose Ramirez
Gennady Martirosyan KO 5 Miguel Pena
Tyrone Brunson KO 3 Jose Medina
Juan Virgen KO 3 Hugo Rodriguez
David Lemieux KO 2 Alfredo Contreras
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 1 Jose Berrio
Matt Korobov W 6 James Winchester

Junior Middleweights

Yuri Foreman W 12 Daniel Santos
(Wins WBA Title)
Kermit Cintron KO 5 Juliano Ramos
Alfredo Angulo KO 3 Harry Joe Yorgey
Austin Trout W 12 Taronze Washington
Ryan Rhodes KO 7 Jamie Moore
King Davidson W 12 Virgil Kalakoda
Akio Shibata W 12 Yuki Nonaka
Armando Patino W 10 Gerardo Esquivel
Brian Rose KO 10 Jason Rushton
Karim Mayfield KO 5 Francisco Santana
Nelson Linares KO 5 Archak TerMeliksetian
Ryan Waters KO 4 Opeti Tagi

Welterweights

Manny Pacquiao KO 12 Miguel Cotto
Lovemore N'dou D 12 Matthew Hatton
Zab Judah KO 2 Ubaldo Hernandez
Joel Casamayor W 8 Jason Davis
Alfonso Gomez Tech. Win 6 Jesus Soto-Karass
Heath Ellis W 12 Jakkirt Suwunnalirt
Roman Seliverstov W 12 Cosme Rivera
Javier Prieto W 12 Ulises Jimenez

Bethuel Ushona W 12 Colin Mayisela
Michel Rosales W 10 Mark Melligen
Gary Young W 10 Gary McMillan
Salvador Sanchez W 6 Jose Pacheco
Mike Jones KO 5 Raul Pinzon
Sadam Ali W 4 Osvaldo Rivera

Junior Welterweights

Marcos Maidana KO 3 William Gonzalez
Denis Shafikov W 12 Fernando Trejo
Chad Bennett W 10 Aldo Rios
Paul McCloskey KO 9 Daniel Rasilla
Nick Casal W 8 Christopher Fernandez
Samuel Malinga KO 5 Pius Dipheko
Lucas Matthysse KO 4 Florencio Castellano
Antonio Lozada KO 3 Salvador Carreon
Henry Lundy KO 1 Aldo Valtierra

Lightweights

Jason Litzau W 10 Johnnie Edwards
Antonio DeMarco KO 10 Jose Alfaro
Krzysztof Cieslak W 10 Matt Zegan
Verquan Kimbrough D 8 Dean White
Daniel Estrada KO 7 Adrian Flamenco
Martin Honorio KO 5 Ricardo Medina
Daniel Estrada KO 5 Ricardo Arrieta
Jorge Barrios KO 5 Michael Lozada
Dorin Spivey KO 4 Meacher Major
Hovhannes Zhamkochyan KO 4 Richard Asare
Mlungisi Dlamini KO 3 Zolani Marali
Daniel Dorrego KO 1 Daniel Brizuela
Brandon Rios KO 1 Lorenzo Estrada

Junior Lightweights

Cassius Baloyi W 12 Roberto Arrieta
Steve Molitor W 8 Jose Saez
Vitali Tajbert W 12 Humberto Gutierrez
Likar Ramos W 12 Angel Granados
Terdsak Jandaeng KO 5 Jack Asis
Roy Mukhlis KO 10 Vacharakrit Senahan
Didier Basulto KO 5 Luis Acevedo

Featherweights

Jesus Cuellar W 12 Luis Juarez
Alex Miskirtchian W 12 Osman Aktas
Azael Gonzalez W 12 Sergio Thompson
Jean Sotelo W 10 Ernesto Batioja
Andrey Isaev W 10 Derrick Campos
Alejandra Oliveras W 10 Natalia Del Pilar Burga
Jackson Asiku KO 8 Heriberto Ruiz
Fredee Gonzalez KO 7 Analy Hernandez
Alberto Garza KO 6 Wilfredo Acuna

Junior Featherweights

Rendall Munroe W 12 Simone Maludrottu
Sergio Ariel Estrela KO 11 Cristian Faccio

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Welterweight Alfonso Gomez unloads a right on Jesus Soto-Karass

Teon Kennedy KO 10 Francisco Rodriguez
Victor Fonseca KO 9 Al Seeger
Sod Looknongyangtoy KO 8 Richard Olisa
Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. KO 7 Genaro Garcia

Bantamweights

Yonnhy Perez W 12 Joseph Agbeko
(Wins IBF Title)
Cristian Mijares KO 3 Jesus Vidal
Z Gorres W 10 Luis Melendez
Alexander Munoz W 10 Felix Machado
Ian Napa W 12 Gary Davies

Junior Bantamweights

Marvin Sonsona D 12 Alejandro Hernandez
Tomas Rojas W 12 Evans Mbamba
Juan Rosas W 12 Federico Catubay
Roberto Sosa W 12 Santiago Acosta
Liborio Solis KO 7 Jose Jimenez
Veeraphol Sahaprom W 6 Alex Boxi

Flyweights

Moruti Mthalane W 12 Julio Cesar Miranda
Zolani Tete KO 1 Anthony Mathias
Gilberto Keb Baas KO 2 Javier Romano
Shinny Bayaar W 12 Chris Edwards
Wilbert Uicab W 12 Job Solano

Junior Flyweights

Rodel Mayol KO 2 Edgar Sosa
(Wins WBC Title)
Giovanni Segura KO 1 Sonny Boy Jaro
(Retains WBA Title)
Hekkie Budler KO 1 Motswaki Moselesele

Yonnhy Perez W 12 Joseph Agbeko

Las Vegas, Nevada: Striking it big with its first-ever boxing promotion, the Treasure Island casino played host to a Halloween night card that was headlined by a Fight of the Year candidate. In the main event of an eight-bout card, IBF bantamweight titlist "King Kong" Agbeko, 118, Bronx, New York, via Accra, Ghana, who rose to a star level with his defeat of Vic Darchinyan in his previous outing, was toppled from his throne by hungry contender Perez, 118, Santa Fe Springs, California, via Cartagena, Colombia.

With the opening bell, Agbeko launched himself at his challenger, who willingly traded shots. Once the war commenced, there was no let-up. Back and forth, up and down, in and out, the two slugged their way through crafty defenses, blasted away with relentless aggression, and absorbed one another's shots.

In the early rounds, the harder-hitting Agbeko, 29, worked his way inside and through the guard of the taller Perez, but the Colombian proved the better counterpuncher and sharper jabber. Up to the 10th round, the fight was a cyclonic rollercoaster ride, with Perez, 30, proving himself the slicker fighter and Agbeko the more aggressive.

Neither fighter blemished the battle with a single inclination to clinch, and despite a few head clashes while the two were feverishly striking at close quarters, neither one voiced a complaint—until a telling 10th round. After a headbutt left Agbeko turning his back to Perez to nurse the damage, the challenger took advantage of the situation by landing big shots to his wounded opponent, two up top and one big left to the body, which folded the African to his knees. While referee Robert Byrd (USA) counted, Agbeko rose to complain.

For many ringsiders, who had the fight at flip-a-coin status, the controversial knockdown appeared pivotal.

When the fight resumed, Agbeko showed little damage, redoubling his efforts to win back the lost round. Working his way within range, he continued to slug away, but Perez, the better boxer, landed the cleaner, albeit less quantitative, punches.

At the end of 12 rounds, no one at ringside really had a clue who won. Both corners raised their fighters up on shoulders for victorious posturing, but the expressions on the faces of everyone in and around the ring said, "Your guess is as good as mine."

All three judges, however, had seen a definitive fight, for the scorecards were unanimous and wide: Glenn Trowbridge (USA) and Barry Druxman (USA) scored it 117-110, while Jerry Roth (USA) had it 116-111, all for Perez.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Agbeko and Perez slug it out

"I knew I was winning the rounds and I deserved to get the victory," said Perez, 20-0 (14), who sported twin gashes on his brow after the battle. "I felt I was more consistent, more active, and I pressed the fight throughout."

Agbeko tasted defeat for the first time since 2004, falling to 27-2 (22), and he wasn't happy about it.

"He headbutted me in round 10," the former beltholder complained after the fight. "I don't think that was fair. The replay clearly shows what happened. I was fighting well to that point. I thought I was winning the fight."

Television: **Showtime**
Promoters: **Don King Productions, Gary Shaw Productions**
(10-31-09)
Chris Cozzone

Antonio DeMarco KO 10 Jose Alfaro

Las Vegas, Nevada: In the co-feature to the Perez-Agbeko bout, Tijuana's DeMarco picked up the "interim" version of the WBC lightweight belt, making him a mandatory challenger to full titlist Edwin Valero, by decisively taking out Nicaraguan Alfaro in the 10th round at Treasure Island.

With sharper skills, footwork, height, reach, and size all on his side, southpaw DeMarco, 134½, established control early, jabbing at the advancing Alfaro, also 134½, and setting up straight lefts. Game but outclassed, the 25-year-old Alfaro pressed the action, but the more he pressed, the harder he was hit by rising star DeMarco, 23. In the second, the Nicaraguan was in trouble. After hitting the canvas on what should have been a knockdown, but was instead ruled a slip by ref Joe Cortez (USA), Alfaro rose on shaky legs and barely managed to finish the round.

To his credit, the more DeMarco punished him, the braver Alfaro got. In the fifth, both landed hard shots, including a big right by Alfaro, but DeMarco kept his game plan under control, jabbing, moving, and setting up big lefts.

By the sixth, DeMarco was dropping bombs on the shorter Alfaro, who was in trouble at round's end. DeMarco reversed the roles in the seventh, becoming the aggressor and driving Alfaro back.

Though he landed several overhand rights, Alfaro, 23-5 (20), was on the short end of the punishment in the ninth. In the 10th, it was all over—after three knockdowns, Cortez finally stopped the fight, at the official time of 2:07.

[The Ring Fighter of the Month]

Manny Pacquiao

When Greg Maddux won four consecutive Cy Young Awards from 1992-'95, there was talk in some corners of the baseball universe that it was time to rename it the "Greg Maddux Award," since he was pitching on a level even the great Cy Young couldn't identify with. Well, now that Pacquiao has been named Fighter of the Month following four consecutive performances, maybe it's time to rename this the "Manny Pacquiao Award." It's reached the point where if it's a month when Pacquiao is fighting, nobody else has a chance at Fighter of the Month honors. What can you say about his effort against Miguel Cotto that hasn't already been said? "Pac-Man" convincingly stomped the number-seven pound-for-pound fighter in the world the way only a guy who's deservedly ranked number one could. For the fourth fight in a row, Pacquiao took on a bigger man—and, for the third fight in a row, a highly regarded bigger man—and dominated him. It's a no-brainer: Manny Pacquiao is the Fighter of the Month. Another day at the office, another Manny Pacquiao Award to add to his collection.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

DeMarco flattens Alfaro's nose

"I was a little surprised the referee let the fight go," said DeMarco, 23-1-1, (17). "At one point he turned around, and I knew then it was only a matter of time."

Television: **Showtime**
Promoters: **Don King Productions, Gary Shaw Productions**
(10-31-09)
Chris Cozzone

Tomasz Adamek KO 5 Andrew Golota

Lodz, Poland: Predictably and with minimal fuss or anxiety, Adamek, 214½, Jersey City, New Jersey, via Goral, Poland, stopped fellow Pole and former heavyweight title challenger Golota, 256½, Chicago, Illinois, via Warsaw, Poland, at Atlas Arena in his first foray into the heavyweight division. Although still recognized by THE RING as world cruiserweight champion, Adamek quickly made clear his desire to compete at heavyweight again.

"David Haye [who preceded Adamek as cruiserweight champ] has been able to step up to heavyweight and win a belt and this would be my goal," Adamek revealed. "If a fight against Haye could happen, obviously I would love this. Unlike Nicolay Valuev, I would actually hit Haye and I would hit him hard and often. We will see what my promoters at Main Events are able to arrange for me."

Golota, 41-8-1 (33), was almost the perfect opponent to arrange for Adamek's return to his homeland, the cruiser champ having managed to transform the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey, into a raucous second home. The 41-year-old veteran Golota made his reputation engaging in back-to-back wars against Riddick Bowe in the mid-1990s. When the going got real tough, however, he was always susceptible to the pressure exerted by his demons, and for an extended period his career has petered out in abject mediocrity. He proved ponderous and vulnerable against a fast and strong opponent who took the fight to him from the opening round—a round in which Golota got floored by a right hand. Adamek, 39-1 (27), was in no mood to let him off the hook either.

Golota was not in good enough shape to avoid the artillery that came his way. Adamek, 32, picked his punches well and stayed in control until another right and hard left knocked Golota down again in the fifth round. American referee Bill Clancy observed him closely, but allowed Golota to continue before a battery of blows by Adamek convinced him to intervene mercifully at the 1:20 mark.

"There was a lot of pressure to go back to Poland, but we don't want to lose the momentum we have built up in Newark," Main Events' Kathy Duva told ESPN.com. "We'll go back to Poland eventually, especially since Tomasz is a big star there now. He wants to fight at heavyweight again and it makes sense. He was comfortable at the weight and he wanted to try it again."

A date in February was tentatively scheduled for the Prudential Center as this issue went to print.

Promoter: **Main Events**
(10-24-09)
Brian Doogan

Yuri Foreman W 12 Daniel Santos

Las Vegas, Nevada: Much was made of Foreman becoming Israel's first "world champion" following his whitewash decision over the badly dissipated Santos on the Manny Pacquiao-Miguel Cotto undercard at the MGM Grand. The Belarus-born, Brooklyn-based Rabbinical student is a great story, and Bob Arum has done a savvy job of nursing the earnest young man into his current position.

But at the risk of putting too fine of a point on it—Foreman is no Benny Leonard. Not even close. He's not a world champion either.

In fact, the only RING-rated fighter Foreman has ever been in the ring with is himself. He entered the fight as THE RING's 10th-ranked junior middleweight, and that's just about where he belongs. Santos had been dropped from the ratings for inactivity before the match was signed.

The fight, despite the WBA belt on the line, was really just another step in the education of Yuri Foreman, which seems to be a pet project for Uncle Bob. Foreman, for his part, did what he had to do: beat a guy who used to be somebody but has been rendered toothless by Father Time and inactivity.

Santos' fancy robe hid a flabby body and some new tattoos, and as soon as the fight began you knew this wasn't the same fighter who had beaten then-undefeated Joachim Alcine in his previous fight, back in July 2008. And it sure wasn't the Santos who beat Antonio Margarito, Giovanni Parisi, and Ahmed Kotiev.

Foreman, 154, spent most of the first round bouncing around on the outside, doing little besides throw half-hearted jabs, while easily avoiding Santos' occasional offensive efforts. It was more of the same in the second, until late in the round when Foreman floored a ducking Santos, 154, with a right hand to the back of the head. The San Juan, Puerto Rico, native began complaining the second he hit the canvas that he'd been fouled, but referee Jay Nady (USA) was having none of it and administered the mandatory eight-count.

The next four rounds were all too similar: Foreman bounced and posed, while Santos dutifully gave chase. Every round, the 29-year-old Foreman found his foe with a couple of clean rights, which was more than enough to keep him comfortably ahead. Foreman did suffer a cut over his left eye in the third, but it was never a significant factor, as he stuck to his fight plan and pecked away from the perimeter.

Nothing much of note happened until the sixth round, when Santos suddenly dropped to the floor, the victim of an accidental headbutt. He got up, and the ugly affair shambled along. But Santos had nothing to offer, and Foreman was satisfied to do just enough to win every round except the seventh on THE RING scorecard.

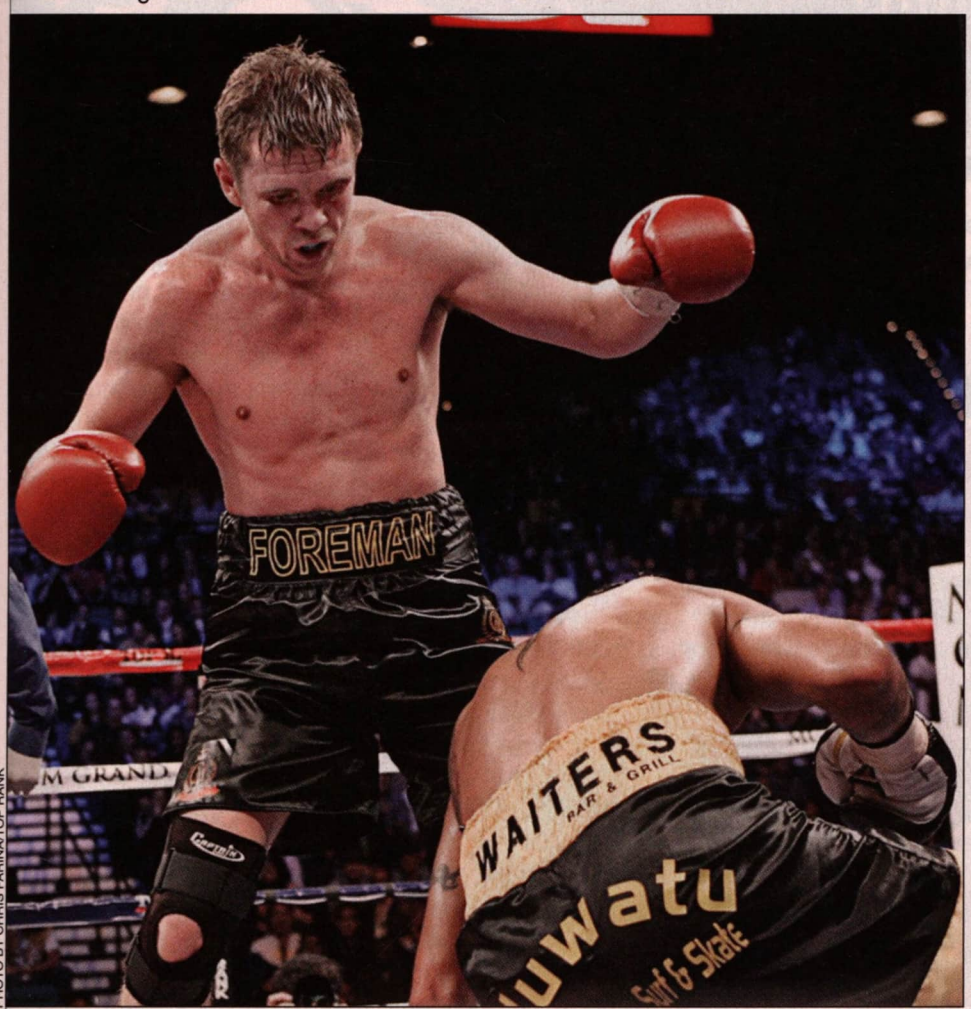


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Foreman floors Santos

Another clash of heads opened a cut over Santos' right eye in the 11th, a round that also saw Foreman increase his punch output slightly. There was a bit of excitement in the final round when Santos, suddenly fighting with something resembling urgency, moved in and forced Foreman, 28-0 (8), to exchange, only to be dropped by a compact left hook for his trouble.

The 34-year-old Santos, 32-4-1 (23), rose again and finished on his feet, thanks as much to Foreman's passivity as his own pride. Yet despite the monotonous and graceless nature of the bout, Arum remained effusive after the Rabbi-in-training won by scores of 116-110 and 117-109 (twice) turned in by American judges Clark Sammartino, Robert Hoyle, and Jerry Roth, respectively.

"I'm very proud to do this for Israel, and for Brooklyn, and to show that Jews can fight," Foreman said.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(11-14-09)
Nigel Collins

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 10
Troy Rowland

Las Vegas, Nevada: It is painfully apparent, after 42 professional fights, that Chavez is pretty much the Frank Sinatra Jr. of the boxing world—modestly talented but just a faint echo of his famous father.

Had he been born into a less celebrated family, Junior would most likely still be fighting on the Mexican club show circuit. But there he was at the MGM Grand, boxing in the main supporting bout on a major PPV card, against a midwestern journeyman who punched like Pee-Wee Herman.

Actually, it was lucky for Chavez that Rowland, 159, is a powder-puff puncher, because the Grand Rapids, Michigan, boxer had no trouble finding Chavez' baby face. However, his marshmallow-like offerings had absolutely no effect on their recipient.

Chavez, 160, Culiacan, Mexico, throws a beautiful-looking left hook to the body, just like his father used to. Unfortunately, it lacks the potency of his father's, and never seemed to hurt the well-conditioned Rowland.

At times, Chavez, 23, looked as bored as those watching must have been, but he was the busier fighter throughout and controlled the tempo of the bout. The boos grew in volume as the fight dragged on, and were especially loud during the eighth round, which seemed to prompt Chavez, 41-0-1 (30), into extending himself a bit more in the ninth. He scored well early and then engaged his adversary in one of the fight's few exchanges, late in the round.

The 34-year-old Rowland, 25-2 (7), stayed busy to win the 10th by a narrow margin, as Chavez was content to coast home an easy winner by scores of 99-91 (Bert Clements), 98-92 (Dick Houck), and 97-93 (Paul Smith).

Where Chavez goes from here is up to Bob Arum, but it's hard to conceive of him beating anybody among THE RING's top-10 middleweight contenders. Not that it's a particularly fierce group; it's just that Chavez is not progressing and probably never will.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(11-14-09)
Nigel Collins

Alfonso Gomez Tech. Win 6
Jesus Soto-Karass

Las Vegas, Nevada: In the most entertaining and competitive fight on the Pacquiao-Cotto undercard, Gomez ended Soto-Karass' 15-fight unbeaten streak

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Chavez posts prosaic win over Rowland

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Gomez attacks Soto-Karass

in a lively fight that was brought to a premature end by a cut over Gomez' right eye, the result of an accidental headbutt in the third round of a scheduled 10-rounder. Gomez' side-to-side movement and quicker hands got him off to an early lead. He made Soto-Karass, 27, miss frequently and countered well with accurate jabs and crisp rights to the head. His lead was greatly enhanced when referee Vic Drakulich (USA) deducted two points from Soto-Karass, one in the third and another in the fourth, for punching low. Although the referee warned Soto-Karass twice before taking the first point, the second seemed an overreaction on Drakulich's part.

It was clear that the blood running into Gomez' eye was bothering him, and Soto-Karass stepped up his attack in the fifth. Gomez, 145½, Tustin, California, regained control in the sixth and was having a good round when Drakulich called time out and asked the doctor to inspect Gomez' laceration. The doctor advised the referee to stop the fight, which he did at the 2:14 mark.

As the match was for something called the WBC Continental Americas welterweight title, it was scored under WBC rules that require the judges to score the incomplete round in which the fight was stopped. Therefore, Gomez won by unanimous scores of 58-54 (Eric Cheek), 57-55 (Patricia Morse Jarman), and 57-55 (C. J. Ross). It was the 29-year-old Gomez' third comeback win since he was bludgeoned into a TKO defeat by Miguel Cotto in April 2008, bringing his overall record to 21-4-2 (10). Soto-Karass, 147, Los Mochis, Mexico, dropped to 24-4-3 (16).

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(11-14-09)
Nigel Collins

Ryan Rhodes KO 7 Jamie Moore

Bolton, England: In one of British boxing's fights of the year, Rhodes, 153½, Sheffield, England, survived a sustained assault over the early rounds and further anxious moments in the seventh before he turned an intoxicating encounter on its head and stopped Moore, 153½, Salford, England, to win the European light middleweight title before a riveted crowd at the Bolton Arena. The bout was also an eliminator for the WBC belt.

Rhodes dropped a close decision to Canadian Otis Grant for the vacant WBO middleweight title in 1997, and he has struggled ever since to fulfill the promise that marked him as an outstanding prospect at Brendan Ingle's famed Wincobank gym when Naseem Hamed was in his pomp. Rhodes and Hamed were close friends and their destinies appeared to be rich and intertwined, but while the self-styled "Prince" went on to rule the featherweights for several years, his younger stablemate could not reach the

same height. Early-round knockout defeats at the hands of fellow Britons Jason Matthews and Lee Blundell seemed to signal the end of his career as a top-flight performer, and he also lost on points to Kelly Pavlik victim Gary Lockett. Splitting with Ingle left Rhodes further in the doldrums, but seven-straight wins coming into this fight had boosted the 32-year-old's confidence.

Moore's confidence was high, too, having won the European title in style against Italy's Michele Piccirillo in March 2009. This was his second defense and the 31-year-old began aggressively, landing lefts and rights on Rhodes' exposed head in ominous fashion. The Sheffield boxer hit back strongly in the second, trading hard with Moore, but the strength of his opponent made it an arduous task. Rhodes, 43-4 (29), was nailed by a left to the chin in the third, but he bounced back again in the fourth when he landed a hard left on Moore 's jaw. Both fighters were warned by referee Howard Foster (England) for hitting low in the sixth round before the sensational seventh proved decisive.

A hook-cum-uppercut with his right hand by the southpaw Rhodes floored Moore early, and it took a monumental effort as he climbed to his feet to beat the count. Rhodes poured it on and Moore, in clear distress, looked ready to cave in. But he dug his heels in instead and managed to swing the momentum back in his direction with a series of hard hooks to the head. Suddenly, Rhodes was vulnerable. He used his legs to get away and his experience was telling. Moore, 32-4 (23), had virtually punched himself out when Rhodes struck again with a right to the jaw that propelled his opponent into the ropes. It was clear immediately that Moore was in deep trouble and, as Rhodes waded in with punch after punch, referee Foster moved in to prevent him from taking further punishment at the 2:35 mark.

"I've always said that my goal was to win a world title and I really believe it's still within me," Rhodes reflected. "This was a tough, tough fight, but I came through it and I'm ready for the big one. All I'm waiting for is the opportunity."

Promoter: **Frank Maloney**

(10-23-09)

Brian Doogan

Kermit Cintron KO 5 Juliano Ramos

San Juan, Puerto Rico: Junior middleweight and welterweight contender Cintron, who was born in Carolina, Puerto Rico, and lived there until moving to the U.S. at the age of eight, made a long-standing dream come true by finally fighting in his homeland and got the result he desired, an easy kayo over relatively anonymous Brazilian Ramos. The bout headlined a small pay-per-view from Coliseo Roberto Clemente that was also supposed to feature Puerto Rican Carlos Quintana, but Quintana pulled out to take a bigger fight against Joshua Clottey (which eventually fell through, but that's another story), leaving Cintron as the sole headliner.

"I've been a professional fighter for nine years now. None of my old managers or promoters were willing to put me on a card here in Puerto Rico," Cintron said before the fight. "Finally, [promoter] Lou DiBella stepped up to the plate and did his job, as well as [manager] Josh Dubin."

PHOTO BY JEFF JULIAN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Cintron tallies easy win in Puerto Rico

From there, it was up to Cintron to do *his* job. Ramos, 150, Sorocaba, Brazil, had only one recognizable name on his record: Philadelphia prospect Mike Jones, who TKO'd Ramos in the sixth in the South American's previous fight, 14 months earlier. Cintron, 150, took care of business one round faster than Jones.

Coming off his upset victory over Alfredo Angulo, Cintron, who recently relocated from Reading, Pennsylvania, to Houston, Texas—the hometown of his new trainer, Ronnie Shields—took a couple of rounds to get going. The 29-year-old former beltholder was mostly just studying Ramos for the first two rounds. In the third, he began to open up, and in the fourth, he hurt Ramos, 30, with a series of powerpunches and dropped him late in the round with a heavy right hand.

Ramos beat the count of referee Roberto Ramirez Jr. (Puerto Rico) and made it to the bell, but that was as far as he would go. Ten seconds after the bell rang to begin round five, Ramos, 15-3 (12), was still on his stool and the fight was officially halted.

Cintron, 32-2-1 (28), explained that the decision to weigh 150 pounds for this fight was intentional, so he could show his willingness to fight at either 147 or 154 and hopefully open himself up to the widest possible range of opponents.

"I'm just going to play both weights and see what happens," he said. "I'm up for any fight that's going to put a belt around me, make money. It's time to start making the big paydays now. I don't want to stay in the game forever."

Television: **Dish Network Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Puerto Rico's Best Boxing Promotion, DiBella Entertainment**
(10-24-09)

Alfredo Angulo KO 3 Harry Yorgey

Hartford, Connecticut: Both Angulo and Yorgey viewed this fight underneath Chad Dawson-Glen Johnson II at the XL Center as an opportunity. Angulo, 153½, Coachella, California, saw fighting Yorgey, 153¼, Bridgeport, Pennsylvania, as a chance to redeem himself after losing to Kermit Cintron back in May 2009. The lesser known Yorgey, seen by many as just a clubfighter with a pretty record, saw in fighting Angulo a chance to show his skills to a larger audience on an HBO *World Championship Boxing* telecast.

Despite a slow first round, it was Angulo who got the result he was looking for. Yorgey did a nice job in the opening round of moving and getting out of harm's way before Angulo could strike. But by the second, Angulo grew comfortable, found his range, and began tagging Yorgey with regularity.

As the midway point of the second approached, Angulo, 27, dropped Yorgey, 31, with a barrage of right hands. Yorgey got back up, but was clearly out on his feet, a development everyone in the arena seemed aware of except for referee John Callas (USA). As Callas made sure Angulo was in a neutral corner, Yorgey stumbled around behind the ref, still woozy.

Angulo certainly was aware of the trouble he had Yorgey in. The Mexican-American bruiser increased the pressure, landing 52 powershots in the second round alone.

Angulo wasted no time going for the finish in the third round. Yorgey, struggling to balance himself on wobbly legs, could do little to fend him off. A highlight-reel left hook to the chin splashed Yorgey to the canvas for good, and Callas finally waved it over at 1:03 of the third round, after Yorgey had taken more punishment than he probably should have.

"Once I started hurting him to the body, I knew the fight was going to be over," Angulo, 17-1 (14), said. "That's when he put his hands down. That's when I hurt him the most. That's what started and finished this fight."

"I felt I won the first round, and I was beating him to the punch, but he kept coming," a groggy Yorgey, 22-1-1 (10), said afterward. "It was a shot to the back of the head that hurt me in the second round."

Yorgey's camp tried arguing that Angulo should have been disqualified, stating their fighter was struck twice when he was down in the second round and that Yorgey was constantly hit in the back of the head. But the reality is, whether Angulo's punches were all legal or not, this was a matchup of two distinctly different classes of fighter, and a disqualification is the only way Yorgey could have beaten Angulo.

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Gary Shaw Productions**
(11-7-09)
Joseph Santoliquito

Zab Judah KO 2 Ubaldo Hernandez

Las Vegas, Nevada: To help overcome his 25-month layoff in time for his date with the lefty Judah, the 32-year-old Hernandez supposedly sparred more than 70 rounds against southpaws. Given his rubbery legs from the opening seconds against the former welterweight champ, it was hard to believe Hernandez survived that many rounds.

Judah didn't break a sweat in swatting Hernandez into quick submission in their main event at the Pearl Theatre in the Palms Resort Casino. The pathetic mismatch headlined a laughable pay-per-view offering dubbed "Road To Redemption." It was a first step back for Judah, whose one-year period of inactivity was a career-long, but it wasn't exactly a measuring stick of what the 31-year-old Brooklyn, New York, native has left.

"There's been a lot of mistakes in the career of Zab," a triumphant Judah said afterward. "I kind of put my right foot first before my left foot. Now I have them moving together. I just want to move on and be the best."

The bout was planned as Judah's initial foray back into the junior welterweight class, where he won two belts as a rising star earlier in the decade, though both fighters weighed in five pounds over the limit at 145. Hernandez, 22-20-2 (10), Fort Myers, Florida, by way of Mexico City, tried to throw Judah off by fighting the first round as a

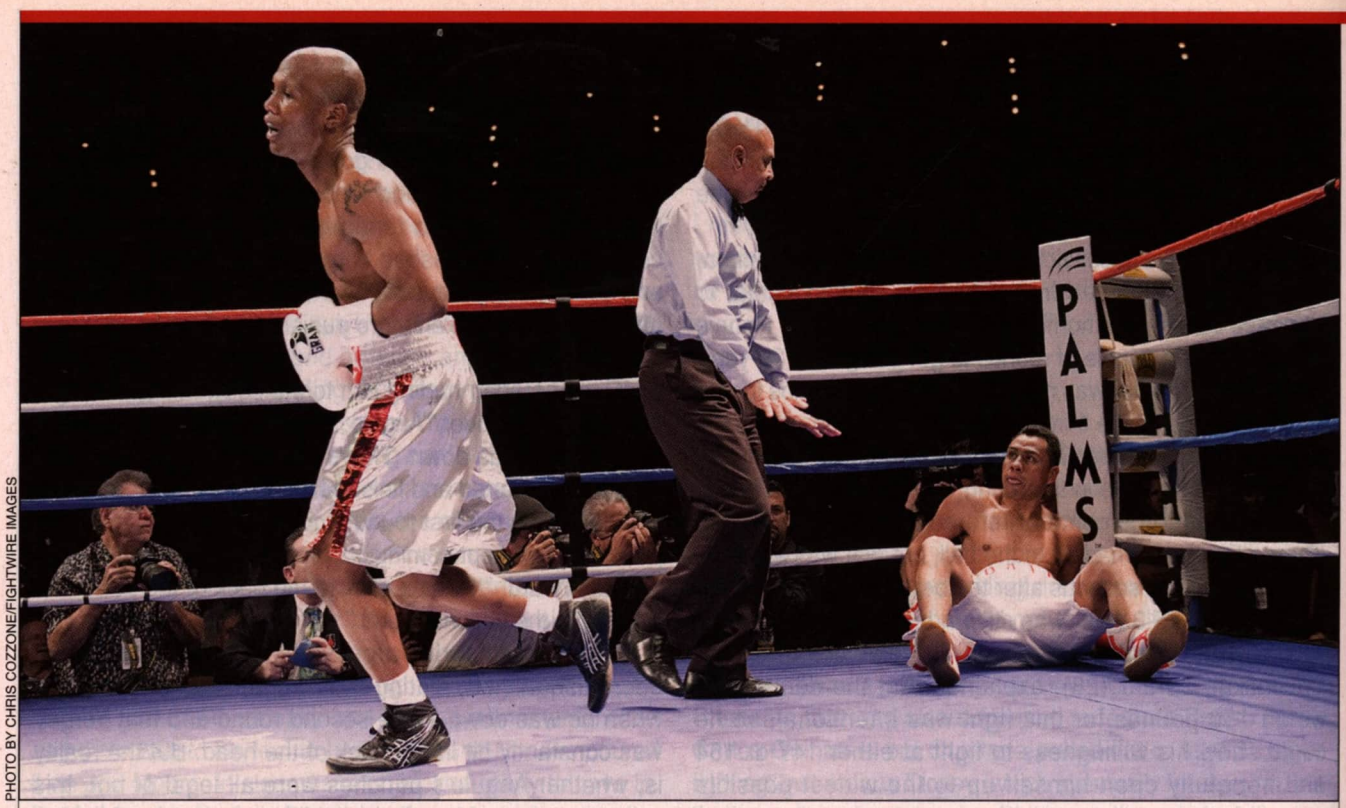


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Judah returns with quick kayo of Hernandez

southpaw. It didn't take long, though, before Judah, 38-6 (26) with 1 no-contest, was using his fast hands to pop the wobbly Hernandez with hard shots to the body and head.

With 30 seconds remaining in the opening round, a slightly off-balance Hernandez went down from a jab to the body. He beat the count then weathered Judah's follow-up barrage long enough to reach the bell. Between rounds, it appeared as if he was contemplating not going out for the second. He did, and despite switching back to an orthodox stance, he was quickly back on the floor from a four-punch combo.

Judah landed a left to the head, then two right hooks to the body before nailing Hernandez below the belt with a left hook. Hernandez dropped to his seat and held his chest, apparently in search of his heart, while Joe Cortez (USA) counted him out at the 35-second mark. Hernandez also received treatment on his right shoulder before leaving the ring.

Afterward, Judah called out junior welterweight beltholder Juan Urango. "I trained really hard for this," he said. "As you can see, I'm in fit condition, I'm ready to go. I'm on a mission, and that's called the road to redemption."

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Vargas Entertainment Promotions**
(11-6-09)

Joel Casamayor W 8 Jason Davis

Las Vegas, Nevada: The comically low-budget pay-per-view card was dubbed "Road To Redemption," but the aging Casamayor looked like he needed a road map in the first half of his co-feature against Davis at the Palms Resort Casino.

The 38-year-old Casamayor, idle for a career-long 14 months after losing the lightweight championship to Juan Manuel Marquez, came in overweight at a career-high 146 pounds for his junior welterweight debut. Sensing an opportunity for a major upset, Davis, a gutsy but outclassed former Washington Golden Gloves champ, allowed the bout to proceed. For five rounds, it looked like a savvy move.

Davis, 143, showed decent hand speed, an adequate jab, and a serviceable right hand against the southpaw Casamayor. He continually pressed the action, while Casamayor stayed on the outside looking to fire off single shots. Davis, Vancouver, Washington, struggled to land the cleaner shots as Casamayor, Miami, Florida, by way of Guantanamo, Cuba, still proved difficult to tag. Casamayor mixed in nice bodywork with an occasional right jab to pull out rounds. Still, it wasn't looking pretty for "El Cepillo," who was gasping for air after the third round.

Davis, 11-5-1 (3), enjoyed his best moments late in the fifth. He caught Casamayor, 37-4-1 (22), with a sharp right hand to the face with one minute to go, then drove his retreating opponent into corners three times before the round ended.

Feeling a sense of urgency, Casamayor finally fought with some energy in the sixth. He began catching Davis on the way in with flush counter lefts, which forced the 27-year-old to move backward for the first time in the fight. Casamayor also began using his reflexes and head movement to make Davis miss badly.

Casamayor remained in that higher gear for the final two rounds, when he routinely rattled off three-punch combos and kept Davis in retreat. Davis, who dropped his fourth-straight

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Casamayor struggles to decision Davis

fight, never seemed to be in any danger of going down, but he looked completely overmatched in the final nine minutes. All three Nevada judges—Robert Hoyle, Patricia Morse Jarman, and Glenn Trowbridge—scored it 79-73 for Casamayor. THE RING had it 78-75 for the former lightweight champ. The referee was Robert Byrd (USA).

"I definitely got the work I needed," Casamayor said through a translator. "We got the eight rounds in. We're just going to move onto bigger and better things, get the rounds under us, and come next year hopefully we'll get a title shot."

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Vargas Entertainment Promotions**
(11-6-09)

Jason Litzau W 10 Johnnie Edwards

Jacksonville, North Carolina: This bout with Edwards wasn't as entertaining as most of Litzau's fights are, but you still have to say the crowd got its money's worth. Of course, that might have had something to do with the fact that none of the fans in attendance paid for their tickets. This was the headline bout on a free show for military personnel at Marine Corps Air Station New River as part of a Veteran's Day celebration.

Looking for his third win in a row since getting stopped by Robert Guerrero in a challenge for a featherweight belt, Litzau wasn't as energetic as usual, and certainly wasn't the crowd favorite. As an ex-Marine and the hometown fighter, 29-year-old journeyman Edwards, loser of three of his previous five fights, had the fans in his corner. But he needed more than that to win. Litzau, a skillful and dangerous (though often sloppy and careless) boxer-puncher, had far too much in his arsenal for Edwards, even without bringing his "A" game.

Litzau, 130, St. Paul, Minnesota, looked awful in the opening round, struggling to locate the constantly moving Edwards and landing just one punch according to CompuBox. By landing five punches, Edwards, 129, Jacksonville, North Carolina, moved into an early 10-9 lead. But it wouldn't last long. Though Litzau, 26, never managed to establish his jab, he did start popping in enough long right hands to carry the rounds, and by the middle stages of the fight, he was buzzing Edwards and getting held in return.

While "The American Boy" was building a lead, he was also suffering some facial damage, in the form of a bloody nose and cut along his left eyebrow. But he battled through the blood and, in the second half of the contest, started catching the shorter Edwards, 15-5-1 (8), leaping in with accurate left hooks.

It wasn't a thriller, but it was good enough that the military folks in attendance gave both fighters a round of applause when it was over. All of the American judges' scores seemed on point, with Cathy Leonard scoring 97-93, David Hudson 98-91, and Barry Lindenman 99-91, all for Litzau, 26-2 (21). The referee was Dale Frye (USA).

Television: **ESPN2**
Promoter: **Square Ring**
(11-4-09) ■

WBC/WBA Welterweight Unification

Shane Mosley

Main Event 12 Rounds

Andre Berto

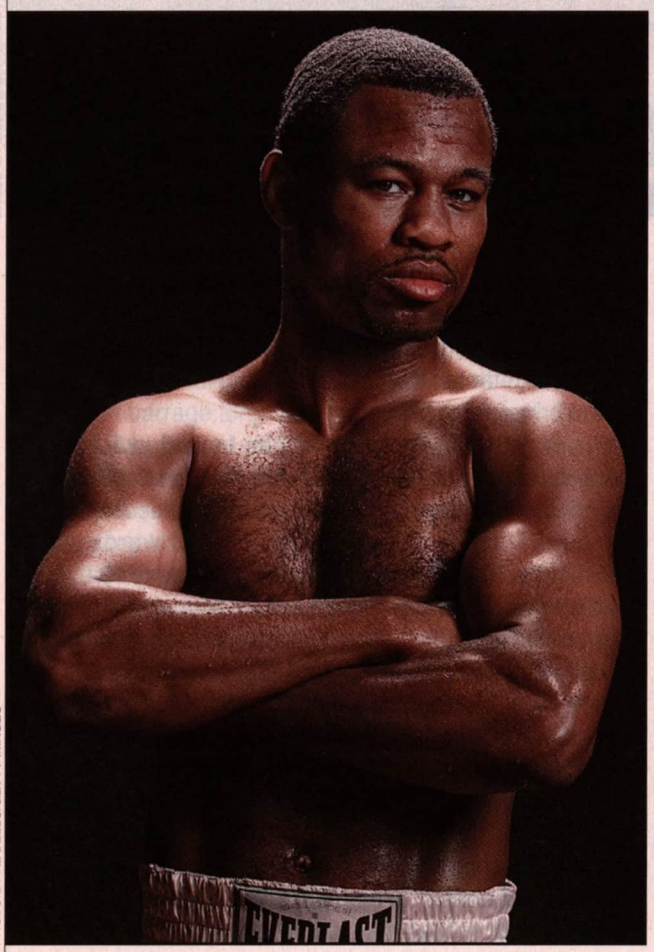


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

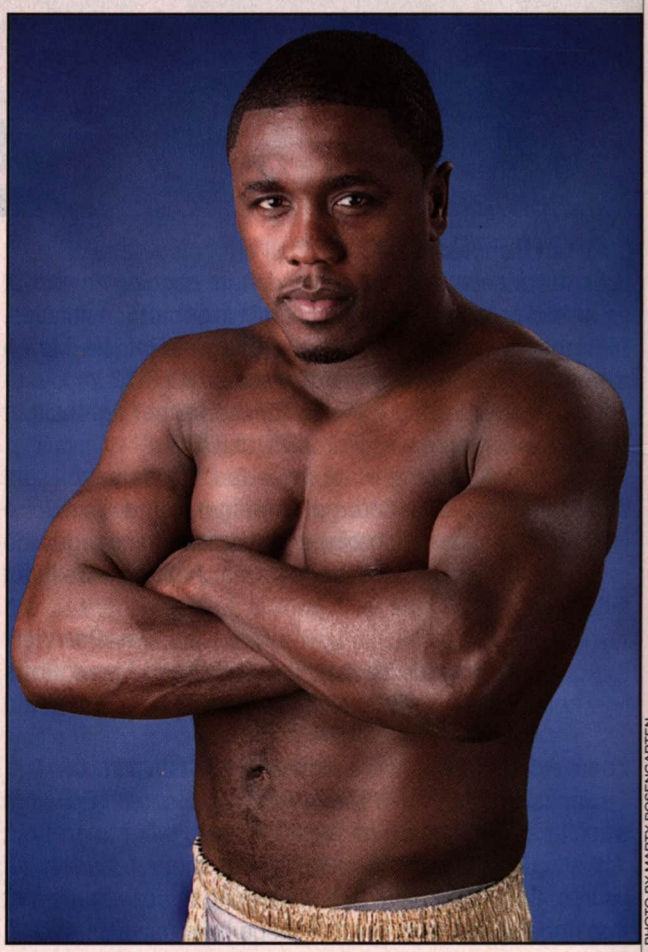


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

While the alphabet unification bout between Shane Mosley and Andre Berto might be a bit of a letdown for Mosley, who campaigned hard for fights with Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, it should be a treat for boxing fans.

Virtually every great fighter is eventually bumped off by a younger, fresher talent, and those supporting Berto figure this will be the bout that finally convinces Mosley that his time at the top is over. Mosley, however, has shown great resilience throughout his Hall of Fame career, as was evident in his brilliant kayo of favored Antonio Margarito.

The January 30 match in Las Vegas, televised by HBO, will be the first big event of 2010, and promises to kick-start the New Year in excellent fashion.

Shane Mosley

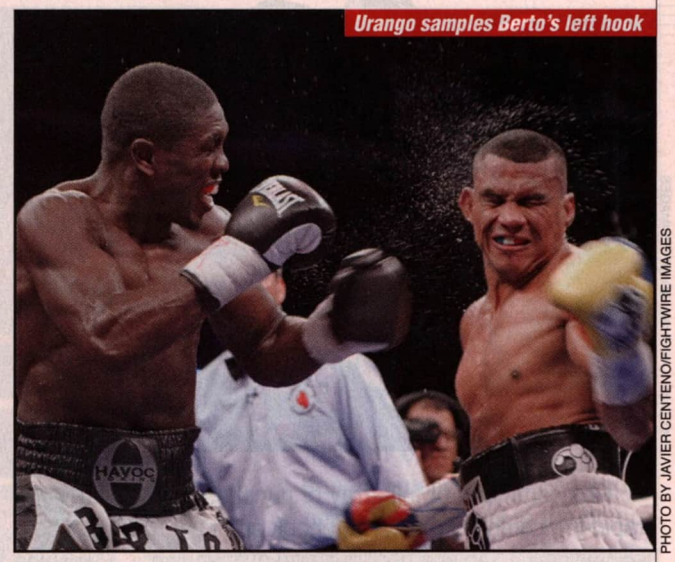
Andre Berto

Record and World Rating

Molsey clocks Margarito with a right

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is 46-5 with 39 knockouts and 1 no-contest ... Tallied 96-3 amateur record, including three U.S. Amateur Championships ... Captured IBF lightweight title in August '97 and made eight successful defenses (all via kayo) before moving up to welterweight in '99 ... Won the WBC welterweight title in June 2000 ... Made three successful defenses before losing title in July '02 ... Annexed THE RING junior middleweight championship (and the WBC, WBA, IBF titles) in September '03, but lost it in his first defense ... Won WBA welterweight belt in January '09 ... Is ranked number one at welterweight by THE RING.

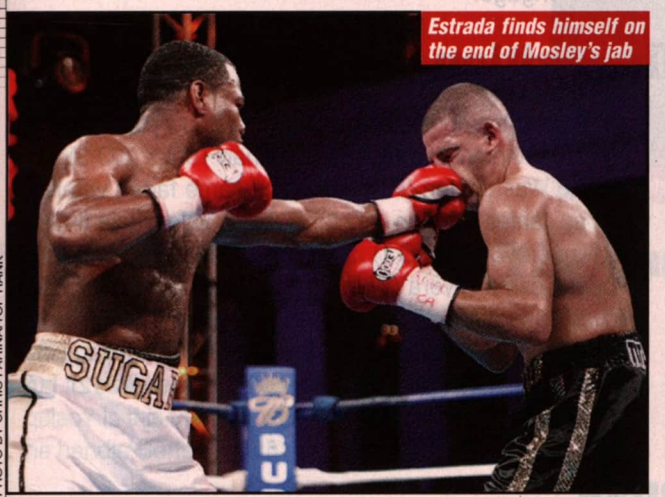


Urango samples Berto's left hook

PHOTO BY JAVIER CENTENO/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is 25-0 with 19 knockouts ... Won two National Golden Gloves championships and two National PAL champions as an amateur ... Also represented Haiti in the 2004 Olympics (was eligible because both parents immigrated from Haiti), but did not medal ... Turned pro in December 2004 ... Won NABF welter belt in September '07 and made one successful defense before winning the vacant WBC welterweight title in June '08 ... Has made three successful defenses of the title ... Is ranked number six at welterweight by THE RING

Age and Physical Equipment



Estrada finds himself on the end of Mosley's jab

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Is 38 years old ... Stands 5'9" with a 74-inch reach ... Muscular, perfectly conditioned body ... Outstanding chin ... Still owns one of the fastest pair of hands in boxing ... Retains punching power into late rounds ... Excellent endurance.

Berto rocks Estrada with a right

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Is 26 years old ... Stands 5'8½" with a 72-inch reach ... bodybuilder physique ... Trains hard, but has faded a bit in the late rounds of some fights ... Very quick hands ... Speedy lateral movement ... Strong upper body ... Good but not great chin.

Shane Mosley

Andre Berto

Best Weapons

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Collazo can't escape Mosley's onslaught

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/ FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Berto fires a right uppercut at Collazo

Has command of full array of punches, mainly thrown in rapid-fire combinations ... Left hook and right hand can both end a fight ... Jab and uppercut also outstanding ... Punishing bodypuncher ... Wealth of experience against world-class opposition ... Confident and resurgent.

Hard left hook, equally effective to head or body ... Crisp left jab and solid right ... Quick combination puncher ... Savvy ring generalship ... Not a one-punch guy against top-notch opposition, but has shown ability to adapt to different styles, and punches hard enough to keep foes honest.

Previous Fight

Looked as good as ever stopping marauding Antonio Margarito in the ninth round of a January 2009 bout that attracted a SRO crowd to the Staples Center ... One of the very best performances of a star-studded career ... Befuddled the hard-hitting Mexican with jabs, combinations, and outstanding footwork ... Finished the fight with a blistering attack, topped off with a flush left hook.

Tallied a comprehensive, 12-round unanimous decision over IBF junior welterweight titleholder Juan Urango on May 30 in Hollywood, Florida ... Opted to box and spoil after fielding several solid rights in the early going ... Scored well enough at range to take most rounds, but was heavily criticized for clinching almost every time Urango tried to engage.

Quality of Opposition

Has fought the best of three weight classes ... Among the quality lightweights he's beaten are Philip Holiday (W 12), John-John Molina (KO 8), Jesse James Leija (KO 9), and Demetrio Ceballos (KO 8) ... At welter he triumphed over Oscar De La Hoya (W 12), Antonio Diaz (KO 6), David Estrada (W 10), Luis Collazo (W 12), and Margarito (KO 9) ... Junior middleweight victims include Fernando Vargas (KO 10, KO 6), Ricardo Mayorga (KO 12), and De La Hoya (W 12) ... Lost twice to both Vernon Forrest (L 12, L12) and Winky Wright (L 12, L12), and once to Miguel Cotto (L 12).

Received the normal build-up against fellow prelim fighters such as Anthony Little (KO 6), Jonathan Tubbs (KO 3), and Taronze Washington (KO 1) ... Next came faded veterans such as James Crayton (KO 5), Roberto Valenzuela (KO 1), and Norberto Bravo (KO 1) ... Stepped up to fringe contenders to beat Cosme Rivera (W 10), David Estrada (KO 11), and Michel Trabant (KO 5) ... Captured vacant WBC 147-pound title with seventh-round TKO of Miguel Angel Rodriguez ... Trio of successful defenses came over Steve Forbes (W 12), Luis Collazo (W 12), and Urango (W 12).

Defense

Relentless quick-fisted attack keeps most opponents too busy to mount sustained counterattack ... Uses angles to avoid punches on the inside and moves well laterally on the outside ... Good upper-body and head movement ... Blocks punches well with arms and gloves.

Solid boxing skills are the foundation ... Beginning to use powerful arms to tie-up adversaries as quality of opposition improves ... Foot speed and agility allows him to avoid a lot of incoming punches, especially when he's moving and jabbing ... Covers up well when the need arises.

Shane Mosley

Andre Berto

Style

Mosley flattens Mayorga

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

A combination of skill, speed, and aggression that his father and original trainer, Jack Mosley, calls "power boxing" ... Never backs down from an exchange and retaliates quickly when tagged ... Can take opponents' legs with body attack ... Excellent finisher.

Gradually morphing into a boxer after early career as aggressive banger ... Using infighting skills less against quality opponents ... Learning to win rounds with jab and movement instead of attacking ... Hand speed usually superior to opponents' ... Digs well to the body.

Berto moves in behind his jab

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

The Questions

Will the long layoff since the Margarito victory hurt his timing? Will he be sufficiently motivated for Berto, after failing to obtain bigger fights against Mayweather and Pacquiao? Is this the fight when he starts to show his age? Can he handle Berto's youth and speed?

Is Mosley too much, too soon for the relatively untested WBC beltholder? Will he freeze when confronted with such a famous and accomplished opponent? Can he take Mosley's best punches? Can he keep up with a foe who is known for strong finishes?

The Outcome

Berto's youthful exuberance and quickness will give Mosley some problems, but unless this is the fight when Sugar Shane suddenly gets old overnight, he should be a bit too much for his inexperienced rival. Look for Mosley to win a comfortable decision in a lively contest.

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[New Faces]

(Continued from Page 26)

warrant at the time. And in July '08, Rios was caught yet again for driving with a suspended license and for failing to have proof of insurance.

"Every time he'd go home, I was waiting for the call from him or someone close to him telling me he was in jail," said Garcia, Rios' trainer, who was like a shadow when the fighter returned to his hometown for a one-round blowout of Lorenzo Estrada in November. "If we leave him by himself, he'll eventually get into trouble."

As his legal spats piled up, Rios had just one fight in '07, a six-round, split-decision win against Carlos Madrid. In '08, he sandwiched a 10-round split-decision victory against Ricardo Dominguez between impressive two-round blowouts of vets Alvin Brown (36 fights) and Sandro Marcos (47), but then struggled to a 10-round draw with the unaccomplished Manuel Perez.

Rios felt he was beginning to be written off by Garcia, Dunkin, and promoter Top Rank, all of whom had better things to do than bank on a guy who couldn't get his life together. Looking back, Rios doesn't blame them. "I was a dumb little kid back then," he said.

So Rios decided to anchor himself in Oxnard, California, where he trains with Garcia at La Colonia Gym. He found a girlfriend there who became a calming influence in his life. Focused on boxing, Rios began to shed his immaturity. His court fees are paid and his problems are behind him, he said. Rios hasn't had a brush with the law since getting picked up for failing to appear at a court appearance back in May.

"A year ago, I wouldn't be asking Cameron or Top Rank to push him or to get him into a title fight," Garcia said. "Now, by next year, if they're able to get him a title fight, I know he'll be ready. If we'd have fought for a title a year, a year and a half ago, it would have been crazy. But now he's grown up. He's thinking like a man. He's being responsible, taking care of his kids (back in Garden City). All that tells me that he's ready."

The most telling sign came in October, when Rios got his much sought-

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Rios only fought once in 2007, winning a decision over Carlos Madrid. He had to first overcome some legal troubles before he finally got himself right, and now seems headed in a good direction.

after rematch with Perez. Rios blamed the draw on the altitude of Denver, Colorado. He arrived for the fight one day in advance, which was hardly enough time to adjust to the thinner air. Rios claims he was winded by the end of the second round. "They didn't believe me," he said of his team.

The rematch was fought in Corpus Christi, Texas, where altitude isn't a factor. "I showed them," Rios said. "I went in and dominated." Rios jumped on Perez from the first round and never backed off. He cut Perez early in the bout, and finally forced referee Rafael Ramos to stop their Azteca America-televised scrap 76 seconds into the seventh round. "This fight," Garcia said, "showed me what I wanted to see."

Garcia liked what he saw of Rios at the 2004 Olympic Trials, where the two were introduced by former Rios stablemate Victor Ortiz. It was the culmination of a long amateur career that began when Rios was just an 8-year-old looking to emulate his older brother, Antonio.

Rios constantly tried to follow Antonio to the gym, only to hear Antonio tell him: *You can't hang. You can't do it.* One day, after Rios began crying in frustration, Antonio finally relented. A scrapper from the start, Rios fell in love with the sport from Day One (his brother gave up boxing a few years later). "I'm a guy who wants to go in there and duke it out; let's get it on," said Rios.

His father, Manuel Rios, guided Brandon, who also won the featherweight title at the 2004 U.S. Nationals, as an amateur. When Garcia offered to turn Brandon pro with the help of a high-powered manager, Brandon and his father didn't hesitate to sign. Garcia has been Brandon's trainer ever since, with the blessing of Manuel, who sometimes helps out in the corner. "I have good people around me," Brandon said.

Dunkin mentioned "interim" beltholder Humberto Mauro Gutierrez as a possible opponent for 2010. Rios said he's ready for anyone. "This guy, he just loves to fight," Dunkin said. "And the harder, the tougher, the better."

The potential opponent who sparks the biggest charge out of Rios is fellow Garden City native Ortiz, who left Garcia and Dunkin in a bitter split in late 2007. Garcia, who said he'd love to see the fight happen at a catchweight of 137 pounds, feels Rios would stop Ortiz in the later rounds. It could make a riveting *24/7* series at some point.

"Rios has a ton of guts," Dunkin said. "He puts on great fights. He's a nonstop, bomb-throwing guy. He gets right in front of you and doesn't stop punching. He's fun to watch. He's just a real, real tough, hard kid.

"He reminds me so much, not in all the ways, of Diego Corrales and Johnny Tapia in that he never cares who he's fighting and he wants to fight everybody. Not in a cocky way. He just wants to fight." ■

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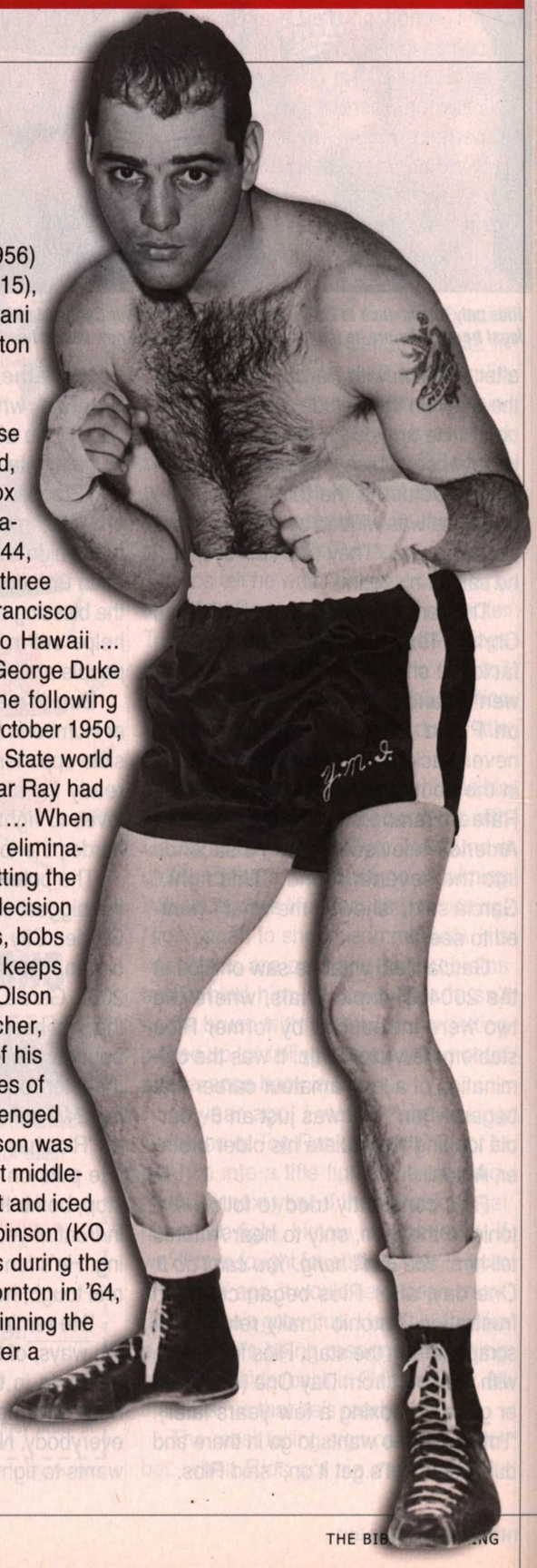
Hall of Fame Profile

THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

Bobo Olson



Birthdate: July 11, 1928
Date Of Death: January 16, 2002
Birthplace: Honolulu, Hawaii
Weight Classes: Middleweight, Light Heavyweight
Professional Record: 99-16-2 (49)
Title Held: World Middleweight (October 31, 1953-May 18, 1956)
Best Performances: Randy Turpin (W 15), Kid Gavilan (W 15), Joey Maxim (W 10, W 10), Tommy Yarosz (W 10), Rocky Castellani (W15), Walter Cartier (KO 5), Joey Giambra (W 10), Wayne Thornton (W 10, W 10), Andy Kendall (W 10)
Year Of IBHOF Induction: 2000
Background: Born Carl Elmer Olson, the son of a Portuguese mother and a Swedish father ... Grew up in a tough neighborhood, where he was involved in numerous street fights ... Learned to box by participating in bootleg bouts against U.S. military personnel stationed in Hawaii ... Took out a professional boxing license in 1944, when he was only 16 years old, using a fake identity card. Won three bouts before his true age was discovered ... Fought out of San Francisco in '45 and part of '46, winning eight straight before returning to Hawaii ... Twenty-one fight winning streak came to an end in July '47, when George Duke handed him his first pro loss. Bounced back to outpoint Duke the following month ... Fought the first of four bouts with Sugar Ray Robinson, October 1950, getting knocked out in the 11th round in a fight for the Pennsylvania State world middleweight title ... Challenged Robinson again, in '52, after Sugar Ray had won the legitimate 160-pound title, but lost a 15-round decision ... When Robinson retired in '52, Olson defeated Paddy Young (W 15) in an eliminator, and then beat Randy Turpin for the vacant championship, putting the British ex-champ down twice and winning a unanimous 15-round decision at Madison Square Garden ... "Bobo is a cutie who slips punches, bobs and weaves, hides his face in a peek-a-boo shell and, above all, keeps punching," wrote Associated Press' Jack Hand in 1953, the year Olson was selected as THE RING's Fighter of the Year. "No great puncher, Olson wears a man down with his steady attack, throwing some of his punches with a half-open glove" ... Tallied three successful defenses of the title, but began having difficulty making the weight, and challenged light heavyweight champion Archie Moore in June '55. Although Olson was the betting favorite, Moore knocked him out in the third round ... Lost middleweight championship in '55, when Robinson came out of retirement and iced Olson in the second round. Also lost fourth and final bout with Robinson (KO by 4) ... Gradually worked his way into the light heavyweight ranks during the following decade, where he scored a pair of wins over Wayne Thornton in '64, but a knockout loss to Jose Torres later that year ended hopes of winning the 175-pound title ... Won three of his final four bouts, but retired after a majority decision loss to Don Fullmer in '66 ... Did public relations work for the Teamsters Union after quitting the ring and later became a union elevator operator ... Suffered from Alzheimer's disease for a number of years prior to his death.

Four hula girls greet middleweight champion Olson upon his triumphant return to Hawaii, where he stopped Jesse Turner in the eighth round of a non-title bout at Honolulu Stadium in June 1954.

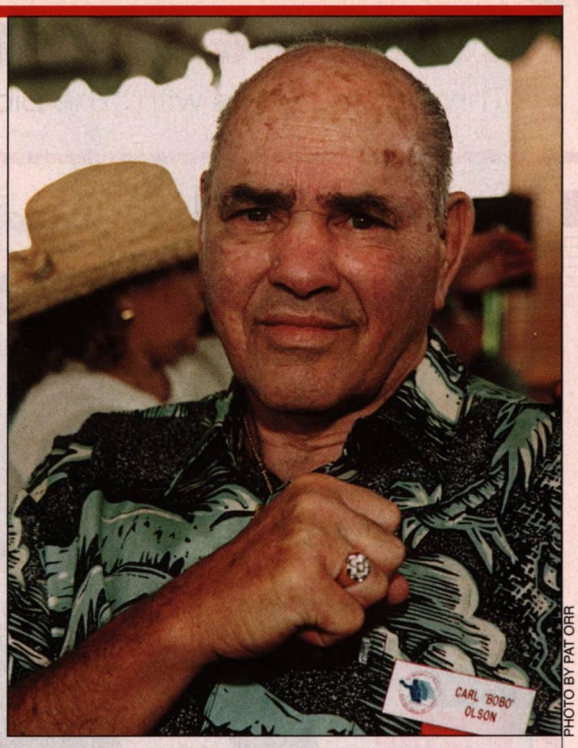
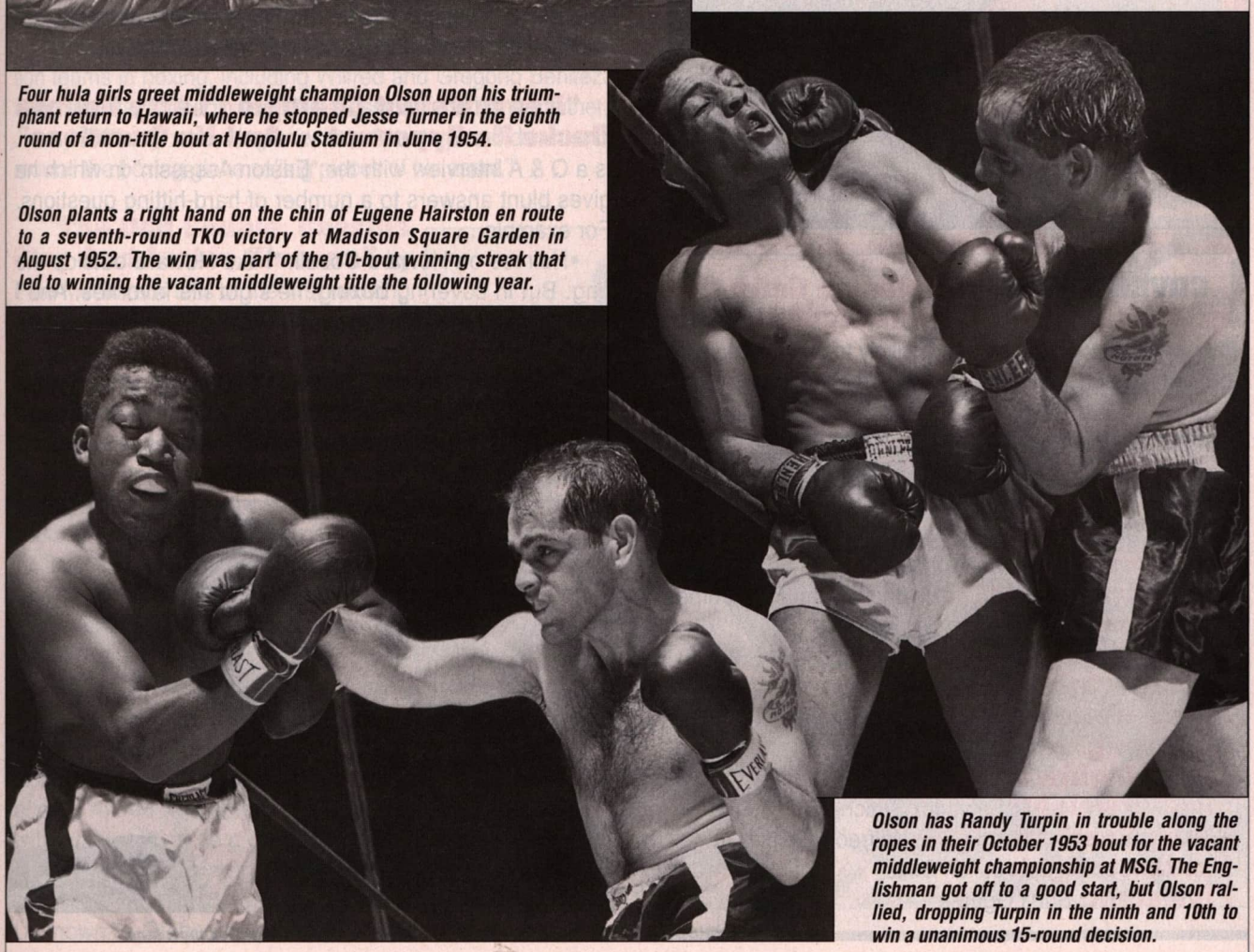


PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Olson poses at the International Boxing Hall of Fame, where he was enshrined in June 2000. The old champ died less than two years later at the age of 73.

Olson plants a right hand on the chin of Eugene Hairston en route to a seventh-round TKO victory at Madison Square Garden in August 1952. The win was part of the 10-bout winning streak that led to winning the vacant middleweight title the following year.



Olson has Randy Turpin in trouble along the ropes in their October 1953 bout for the vacant middleweight championship at MSG. The Englishman got off to a good start, but Olson rallied, dropping Turpin in the ninth and 10th to win a unanimous 15-round decision.

THE RING Flashback

Through the years with "The Bible of Boxing"

January 1981

COVER STORY: "Gentleman Gerry Cooney: White Hope Or White Hype?" is Michael Katz' evaluation of "the man most likely to bring excitement to the heavyweight division." Cooney, fresh from a first-round knockout of over-the-hill Ron Lyle and closing in on a title shot, was a hot commodity. But Katz had his doubts.

Do the managers of Cooney "consider an undefeated professional career of 24 victories over an assortment of opponents who could be found on any supermarket shelf next to the Hunt's and Del Monte cans prepare a fighter for a world champion?"

Katz also writes about Cooney's discomfort with the way he is being marketed: "Cooney, in case you hadn't noticed, is white. And maybe with Ronald Reagan as President, the Moral Majority would like to elect Cooney heavyweight champion of the world. But the fighter himself finds all mention of race in boxing 'disgusting.' He cringes when he hears that racist appellation, 'Great White Hope.'"

Cooney had one more fight (a one-round kayo of Ken Norton) following this article, and then challenged Larry Holmes for the heavyweight championship in June 1982. Holmes stopped him in the 13th round, which pretty much ended Cooney as a serious title threat. The Irish-American slugger had five more fights, losing the final two via knockout.

"Heavyweight Champion Larry Holmes Ducks No Opponent ... And No Questions" is a Q & A interview with the "Easton Assassin" in which he gives blunt answers to a number of hard-hitting questions. For example ...

•Holmes on Howard Cosell: "I like Howard outside the ring. But in covering boxing, he's got his favorites. And I don't think Howard has been fair to me. I don't think he's given me my just dues."

•Holmes on Cooney: "There are fans praying for a white champion. Those fans believe Cooney is the man who can beat me. If they believe that, then they're dopes, and Cooney is their hoax."

World Champions

(for the period ended November 4, 1980)

Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Light Heavyweight: Matthew Saad Muhammad
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Ayub Kalue
Welterweight: Roberto Duran
Junior Welterweight: Aaron Pryor
Lightweight: vacant
Junior Lightweight: Yasutsune Uehara
Featherweight: Salvador Sanchez
Junior Featherweight: Wilfredo Gomez
Bantamweight: Julian Solis
Flyweight: Shoji Oguma

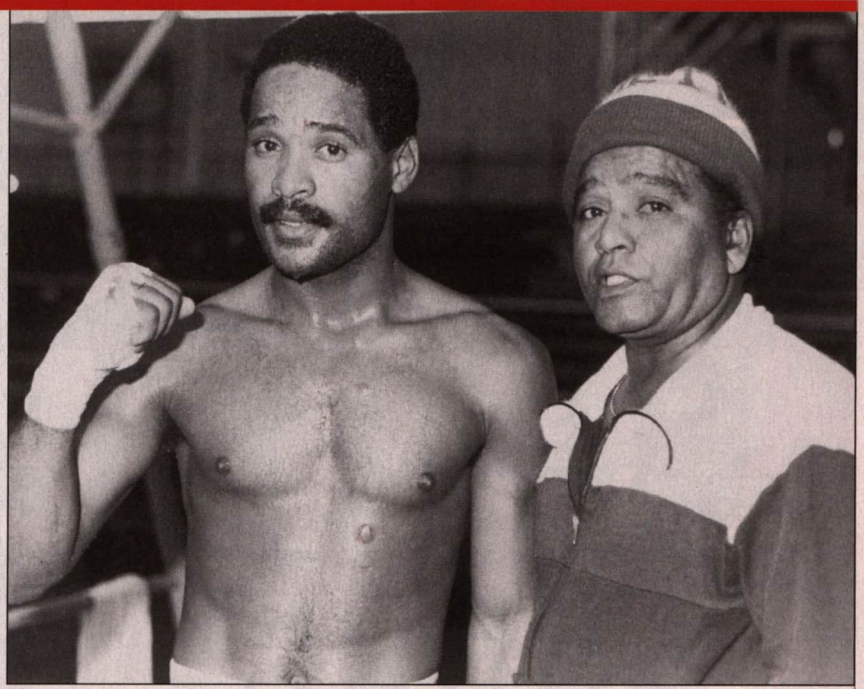
Holmes was scornful in his comments about Cooney's fans

"The Ten Greatest Fights Ever" is a list put together by the editors and THE RING's International Ratings Panel. Accompanying the list is a photo of each fight and a blurb about what happened. Here, starting with number one, are the 10 fights:

Joe Louis-Billy Conn I, Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney II, Joe Frazier-Muhammad Ali I, Tony Zale-Rocky Graziano I, Rocky Marciano-Jersey Joe Walcott I, Archie Moore-Yvon Durelle I, Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier III, Rocky Graziano-Tony Zale II, Ray Robinson-Jake LaMotta IV, Willie Pep-Sandy Saddler II.

"Boxing's Fathers & Sons: A Real-Life 'All In The Family'" by Barney Nagler is a theme piece that looks at the problem of fathers training and/or managing their son's boxing careers. Nagler spins off Howard Davis' recent failure to win the WBC lightweight belt from defending titleholder Jim Watt. Davis was trained by his father, Howard Sr., who Nagler condemned for "not knowing how to light a fire under his fighter's spirit."

Nagler also explores the relationships between other father-son teams in boxing, including Wilfred and Gregorio Benitez, Sean and Pat O'Grady, and Mike Rossman and his stepfather, Jimmy DiPiano, who, Nagler writes, "went up and down and around the boxing globe selling pieces of his asset."



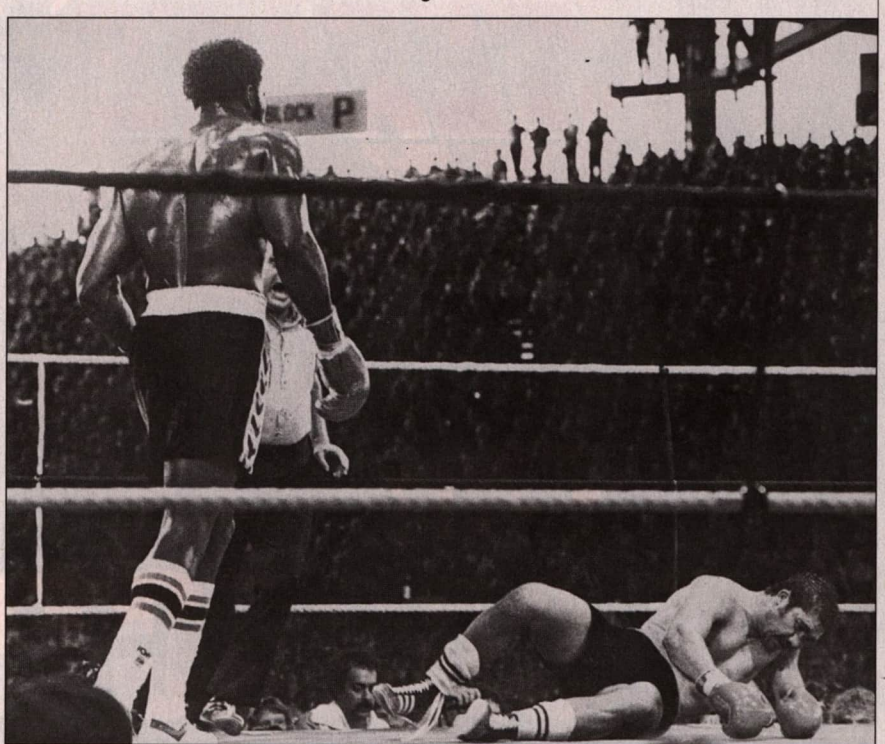
Troubled partnership: Wilfred and Gregorio Benitez

"The Odd Couple: Cassius Clay And Jackie Gleason" by Pete McGovern tells of the first meeting between the future heavyweight champion and the famous entertainer on the set of *Requiem For A Heavyweight*. Clay, who had a small role in the movie, was introduced to Gleason, who was sitting around on the set, drinking with Anthony Quinn, Mickey Rooney, director Ralph Nelson, and a few others, between takes.

Clay "demanded that all present come up with a $20 bill or of whatever high denomination, autograph it, and return it to him," writes McGovern.

Everybody went along with Clay's scam but Gleason, who refused to part with any of his money. Clay got angry and stormed out. Gleason, who was also riled, offered retired heavyweight Alex Miteff (who was working as a chauffer for producer David Susskind) $15,000 to fight Clay and beat the bleep out of him. Unknown to Gleason, Miteff had been knocked out by Clay a few weeks earlier, and had no intention of going back for more.

"Fighter Of The Month" is Mike Weaver, who had just defended the WBA heavyweight title with a 13th-round knockout of highly favored Gerrie Coetzee in Bophuthatswana, a South African satellite and home of the Sun City resort. The 17,000 fans saw a give-and-take slugfest, which came to an abrupt halt when Weaver put Coetzee down for the count with a right to the chin. ■



Weaver knocks out Coetzee in South Africa

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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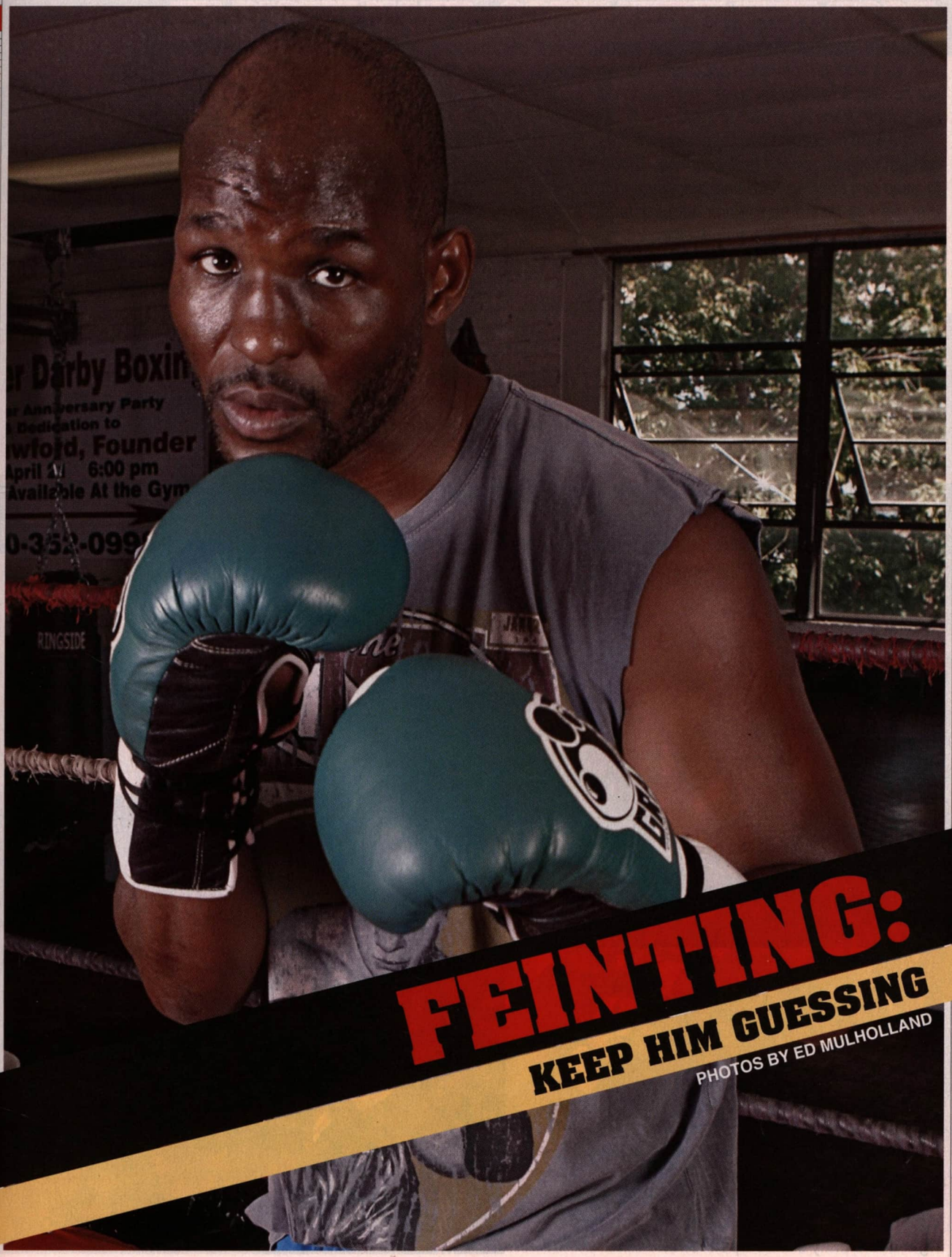
Perfect Execution

Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

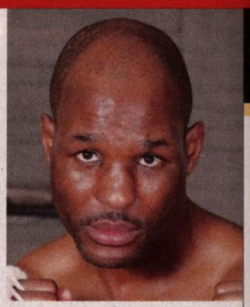
By Bernard Hopkins



FEINTING:

KEEP HIM GUESSING

PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND



BERNARD HOPKINS *Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.*

(All photos taken at Andy Carr's Gym in Upper Darby, PA)

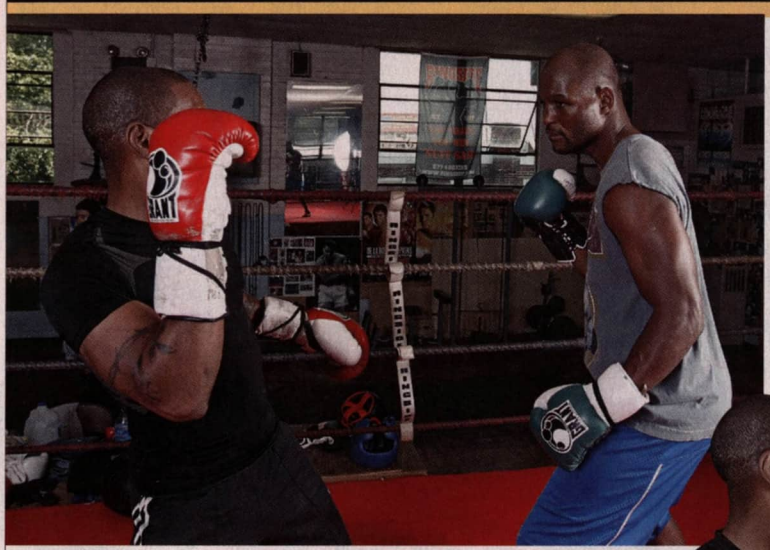
If you've been reading this column every month, you know by now that boxing is a thinking man's game and the man who wins most times is the man that uses his head and out-maneuvers and out-thinks his opponent. Anyone can go in the ring and just throw punches. But that's not boxing. A real fighter uses his head to create openings, conserve energy, get position, hit, and not get hit. Feinting is part of that.

You feint to distract your opponent, make him think something's coming that isn't coming so you can get him with what's really coming. That's the fun of this sport—out-thinking your man. You want to keep him thinking hard and preoccupied with trying to figure out what you're doing. If he's doing that, he has less time to think about what he's doing. Then he's not fighting; he's reacting. You always want to keep a guy guessing, and feinting does that.

Feinting in a boxing ring is the same as making a move on the basketball court or faking one way and cutting another on the football field. Any time you're competing, you want to hide what you're going to do because if your opponent can see it in advance, he's got a good chance of stopping it. Feinting hides what you want to do while at the same time creating an opening for what you want to do—if you do it right.

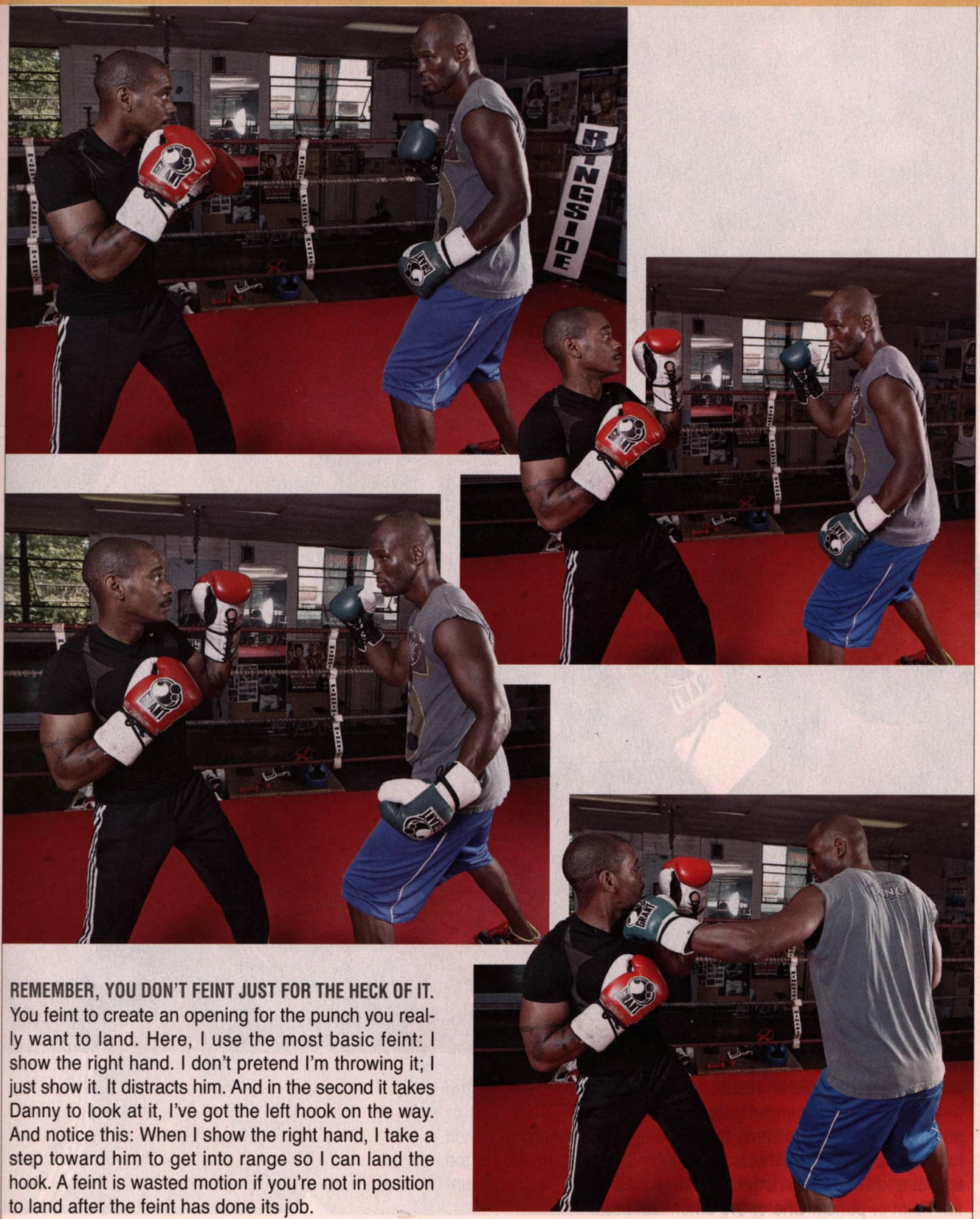
When I knocked out Oscar De La Hoya with a left hook to the liver, I created the opening by standing in front of him and feinting. I feinted so much he didn't know what was coming, and when I saw the opening I stepped in with that hook and the fight was over. It's important that you don't feint too often—just at the right time, at the right moment. If it's working, use it. But make sure you do it right. You've got to sell it.

FEINT THE JAB, FOLLOW WITH THE RIGHT



HERE I'M FEINTING THE JAB. Notice I'm stepping in, my left arm is starting to come up and it really looks like an up-jab is coming. Danny Davis has bought it; he's pulling back (a no-no) and has brought up his right to catch the jab he thinks is coming. But I don't jab, I come with the straight right and Danny's wide open for it.

FEINT THE RIGHT HAND, COME WITH THE HOOK



REMEMBER, YOU DON'T FEINT JUST FOR THE HECK OF IT. You feint to create an opening for the punch you really want to land. Here, I use the most basic feint: I show the right hand. I don't pretend I'm throwing it; I just show it. It distracts him. And in the second it takes Danny to look at it, I've got the left hook on the way. And notice this: When I show the right hand, I take a step toward him to get into range so I can land the hook. A feint is wasted motion if you're not in position to land after the feint has done its job.

FEINT TO THE BODY: THE WRONG WAY

WHAT AM I DOING WRONG HERE? I'm too close here, and not in the best position to punch or feint. I'm in between. Either feint or punch, not both at the same time, and if you're punching, punch to land and land hard. This is half-punch, half-feint. My arm is too far out and I'm right in range for Danny to land a right hand counter. Feint or punch. One or the other. Not both.

FEINT TO THE BODY: THE RIGHT WAY

SEE THE DIFFERENCE? I'm about as close, but I haven't over-sold the feint; there's no contact. I'm on balance and in perfect position. Now when Danny drops his hands to block the body shot he thinks is coming, I can come over with the right hand and when it lands it's not going to tickle.

By Michael Rivest

Silver Gloves: Giving Young Boxers A Fighting Chance

In a culture that expels 10-year-old kids from school for drawing pictures of a water gun, some would argue that Silver Gloves is a crazy idea. (Encouraging 10-year-olds to fight? Are you crazy? There'll be riots in the schools, global disaster, atonal music ...)

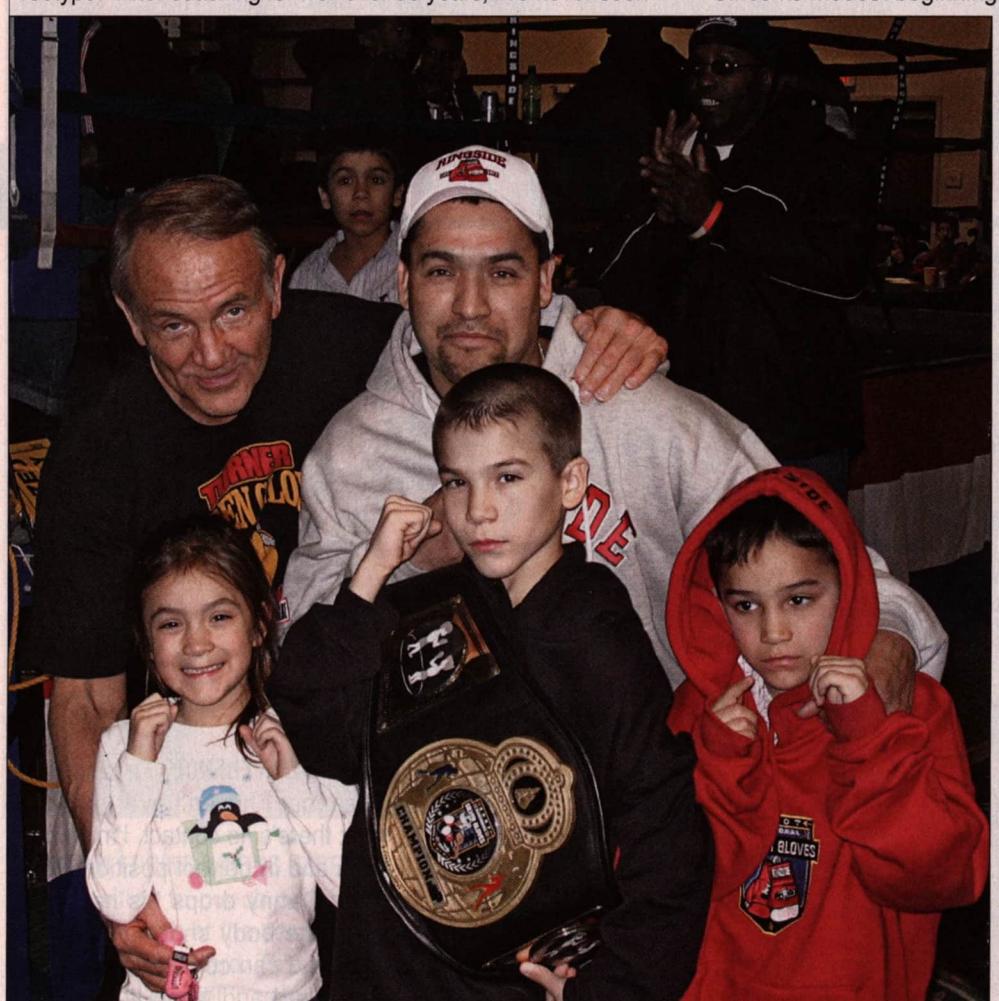
"I think that folks who look at it that way need to step a little closer," said Ray Rodgers, Silver Gloves President and Executive Director since 1980. "It's actually the complete opposite. We're about teaching kids respect—for themselves and for others; boxing is just the means to that end."

Rodgers took the opportunity here to blast a relentless stereotype: "After coaching for well over 50 years, I've never seen boxing make a bully out of a kid, but I've regularly seen it work the other way around."

Named after Golden Gloves, its better known older brother, Silver Gloves was founded in 1968 by Frank Granados and Frank Hess, "two guys who understood young kids very well and the power boxing has as a character building tool," Rodgers said.

Since Golden Gloves is for youth 16 and over, the idea was to target kids 10-15 years old. "Those kids are all the more open to being influenced by the discipline and demands of boxing, and the caring adults who teach it," said Rodgers.

Since its modest beginnings in a few mid-western states, Silver Gloves grew during Rodgers' watch to embrace the entire contiguous United States, which they divide into eight regions. Participants advance through state, then regional tournaments each January to make it to the annual Silver Gloves National Tournament in Independence, Missouri, in February. All but the 10-year-olds are eligible to advance to the Nationals.



Ringside's John Brown (top left) poses with Lewis Hernandez and children (from left to right) Chello, Nico, and Marciano

Silver Gloves is sponsored by Ringside, Inc., something that makes Ringside owner John Brown a proud guy. "We've been their corporate sponsor for what, 18 or 20 years? And each year it's the same thrill for me," said Brown. "The biggest fun is watching the adults who come and see it for the first time.

"Besides being surprised by the level of competitiveness because they can never believe how good these kids are," Brown continued, "people get to see just how positive it is for the kids. They make believers out of everybody."

Results

USA vs. Great Britain

October 16, 2009, Ted Constant Convocation Center, Norfolk, VA

Great Britain: 5
USA: 3

112 pounds: Louie Byrd, Denver, CO, dec. Daniel Chapman, UK
119 pounds: Andrew Selby, UK, dec. Luis Rosa, East Haven, CT
125 pounds: Ian Weaver, UK, dec. Josh Bowles, Harrisburg, PA
141 pounds: Scott Cardle, UK, dec. Andre Sherard, Milwaukee, WI
152 pounds: Errol Spence, Desoto, TX, dec. Craig Dixon, UK
165 pounds: Jesse Hart, Marquette, MI, TKO Karl Kirkham, UK
201 pounds: Wadi Camacho, UK, dec. Anthony Mack, Plano, TX
201+ pounds: Amin Isa, UK, dec. Javier Torres, Commerce, CA

Marci Yates counts herself among the converts. As manager of Independence's Hilton Garden Inn, she's been lodging the 300 or so youth every year for the past 10 years. "I've actually taken them with me as I've changed hotels over the years. That's how much the event has come to mean to me, not only as personally, but as a manager concerned with staff morale," she said. "More than other youth groups who come here, the young boxers are so focused and always so respectful. Their behavior and attitude is touching to the hotel staff. We all end up wearing Silver Gloves T-shirts. The kids are a morale builder for us. We love it when they come."

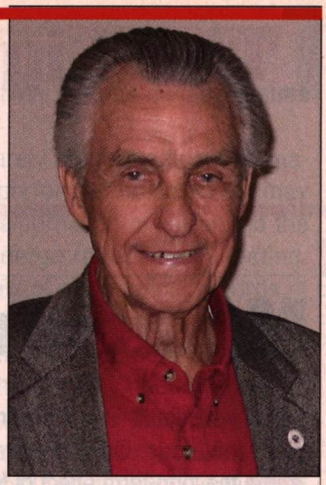
Paul Davis of Rochester, New York, remembers how, in 1982, he took the trip to Independence as a young competitor. "I was 13 and had never been out of my neighborhood," he said. "The next thing I know, I feel like I'm on the world stage and everybody's clapping." How did he do? "Well, I lost the first bout, but that didn't matter in the least. I learned that it's not about winning. I learned that I can do anything I want if I set my mind to it. It was probably the most valuable lesson I've ever learned."

Instead of coming back home and joining his friends on the street ("A lot of them ended up in trouble and a lot of them are dead"), Davis made other choices. He now owns a janitorial company that made well over $2-million last year. "I can't say Silver Gloves is responsible for all of my success, but I can say that the experience changed me. I was a different kid because of it. It taught me lessons I still use, about discipline, character, even about how to lose, especially, how to lose."

Silver Gloves is also huge on education and puts its money where its mouth is. "Any youth participating at any level of Silver Gloves involvement, even if it's one bout in a qualifying tournament, is automatically eligible for scholarship support to college or a trade school," said Rodgers, "and it's renewed every year they're there."

Have some Silver Gloves graduates gone on to success in pro boxing? Rodgers saves his heartiest laugh for that question, as he delivers a list of names—Shane Mosley, Juan Diaz, Oscar De La Hoya—that will make you put your pencil down.

He's Seen it All



Rogers: Silver Gloves president and executive director

Ray Rodgers first stepped into the ring the same year Joe Louis fought Billy Conn, for the *first* time, in 1941. He may have only been in the fifth grade, but here's the point: There isn't much about boxing that Ray Rodgers hasn't seen in his 73 years.

"Way back then, in Tecumseh, Oklahoma, boxing was a letter sport," he said, "So, I tried it and I've been hooked ever since."

Rodgers fought as an amateur until he graduated Arkansas State Teachers College in 1960. Any thoughts of turning pro were derailed by his love of the amateur scene and "when I was offered only $35 for my first pro fight," he said with a laugh.

But he did learn the art of the cut man and went to work the corners in scores of championship fights, including those of Hector Camacho, Wayne McCullough, and Tommy Morrison. "To this day, Jermain Taylor hasn't had a professional fight where I wasn't cut man," he said, proudly.

But mostly, Rodgers' passion remained as a volunteer in the amateur world. In addition to serving as Silver Gloves President and Executive Director since 1980, Rodgers runs the Golden Gloves Gym in Little Rock, Arkansas, and is there three nights per week training the 30 or so youths who routinely come by.

Rodgers has no plans to retire. "If the Lord's willing, I'll die at ringside—and not any time soon. ■

Coming Events

Silver Gloves Regional Tournaments

•Region I (ME, VT, NH, RI, MA, CT, NY, NJ)
January 8-10, Oneida, New York
•Region II (PA, OH, IN, KY, MI)
January 14-16, Ashland, Kentucky
•Region III (WV, VA, DC, GA, AL, FL, NC, SC, MD, DE)
January 7-9, North Carolina
•Region IV (ND, SD, MN, WI)
January 7-9, Cass Lake, Michigan
•Region V (NE, KS, IL, IA, MO)
January 8-10, Des Moines, Iowa
•Region VI (AR, OK, TX, LA, MS, TN)
January 14-16, Little Rock, Arkansas
•Region VII (WA, OR, ID, MT, WY)
Date and location to be decided
•Region VIII (NM, NV, AZ, CO, UT, CA)
January 7-10, Norwalk, CA
•Silver Gloves National Tournament
February 5-7, Independence, Missouri

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

Momentous Implications

Every once in a while medical research can be momentous. On October 17, a *60 Minutes* segment on the long-term effect of football concentrated on Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE). CTE is a progressive condition resulting from repetitive head trauma producing a dementia in 40- and 50-year-olds.

Dr. Ann McKee, a neuropathologist at Boston University's School of Medicine, is leading the research into this disorder that also affects boxers.

In 2003, during a routine exam of a 70-year old man's brain that died with a 15-year history of Alzheimer's disease, Dr. McKee instead found a degenerative disorder seen in those who have suffered brain trauma. The man turned out to have been a boxer in his youth.

Subsequently, she has discovered similar changes in brain autopsies of 16 former athletes (11 football players and five boxers). A protein called "tau" had built up in their brain cells, eventually killing them.

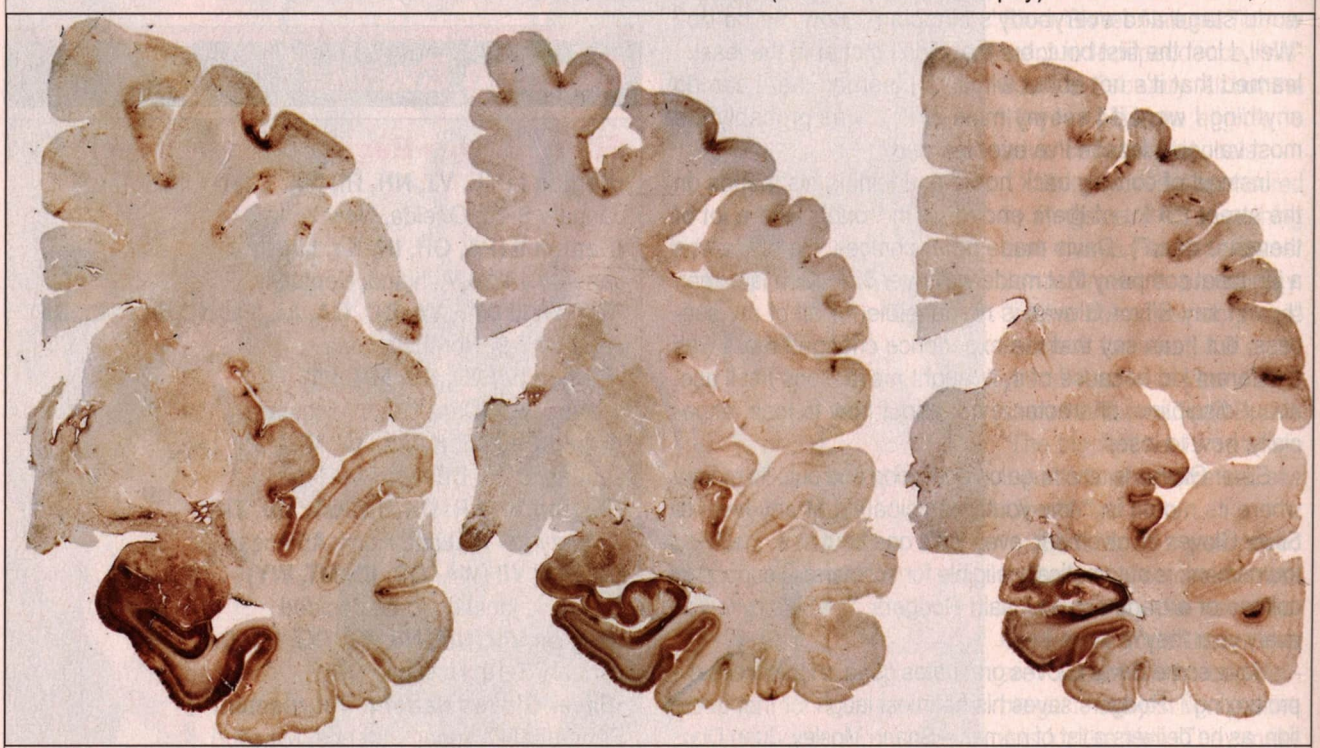
It is nothing new to know that up to 20 percent of boxers go on to develop cognitive issues later in life, including Parkinson's-like movement disorders. But Dr. McKee has seen this pathology in an 18-year-old football player who died from something unrelated to the sport. He had played football for only a few years, but his brain showed the same deterioration seen in those decades older with longer exposure to trauma!

The implications of this cannot be ignored by anybody who works in combat sports.

If a boxer required only a few years of exposure to develop a degenerative brain disorder making them resemble an Alzheimer's patient, how do we diagnose it early and how do we stop the downhill spiral?

Other questions also beg answers: Do these abnormalities begin in amateur boxing careers? What role do alcohol and drugs (including anabolic steroids) and heredity (family history of dementia) play? Will stopping someone from taking headshots halt or even reverse the process if done early enough or if the fighter is given more time off between bouts?

Dr. McKee noted that typical neurologic testing, such as MRI scans, may not show any of these changes seen postmortem (after death on autopsy) until it is too late, and



Brown pigment shows the areas of the brain that have been damaged

The punches caught up with Patterson late in life

hopes that one day there will be studies that can demonstrate the findings.

"I would like to see urine, blood, and spinal fluid studies demonstrate these changes," Dr. McKee told THE RING. "If there is a marker, something such as urine, we can easily follow it."

This might already be possible.

A 2006 Swedish study of 14 amateur boxers demonstrated increased levels of tau in their cerebrospinal fluid after a bout—the same protein Dr. McKee found in CTE athlete brains. A 2009 Turkish study of 44 amateur boxers showed evidence of a similar protein that can be measured in the blood, which also signifies damage to nerve/brain cells.

Hopefully, we are closer to preventing the fate that caused the cognitive decline of so many fighters, including Floyd Patterson and Sugar Ray Robinson, and we may have a way to objectively identify those currently at risk and in need of retirement.

Can Healthcare Reform Fix Boxing's Ills?

Every day in the national news we hear about the proposed healthcare reform bills before Congress. Few have read the more than 20,000 pages, while even fewer understand the fine print. I often see patients with inadequate medical coverage, others unable to undergo necessary testing, and rising premiums resulting in policy cancellation. I am also concerned about the lack of tort (malpractice) reform forcing physicians to shut their doors.

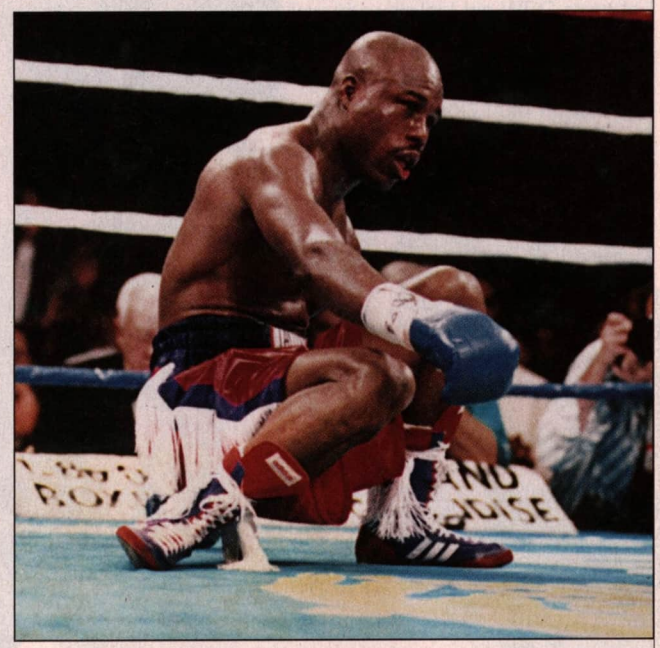
Despite my apprehension of the federal government's intervention in healthcare, I try to look on the bright side of what reform could do for boxers and the sport in general.

Each of the bills includes a changeover from paper to computerized medical records. Computerized records will allow all boxing commissions to see a complete medical history of every fighter. They will improve accessibility of test results that often prevents fights from taking place because records are delayed in reaching the commission. This will also diminish potentially serious medical issues slipping through the cracks.

Currently, commissions rarely share medical information. A fighter's HIV screen performed in New York may never be forwarded to the California commission, so the boxer might be forced to undergo repeat costly testing. Furthermore, without a review of old medical records, it becomes difficult to know if follow-up exams should be ordered. If a boxer had a retinal detachment in Nevada, has surgery, is cleared to fight, but may need eye exams before and after every bout, the Federal Suspension List and Fight fax (which houses all medical suspensions) may lack details to protect privacy but then minimize medical history that is later unseen by other physicians.

The Public Option health insurance plan proposed by the Democrats will improve affordability. More fighters would be able to undergo needed prefight and between-fight care that might be avoided, such as a sore hand, a cut sustained in training, an infection in need of antibiotics, as well as access evaluation after a knockout in the gym. True, no boxer ever competes 100 percent healthy, but too often poor performance and ring tragedies relate to medical issues that were overlooked due to lack of health care access.

One of the greatest inequities among commissions is the lack of uniformity in medical requirements. It is why former IBF junior welterweight and WBA welterweight titleholder Meldrick Taylor was allowed to fight in Alabama and Minnesota with CTE in 2002, when no other commission would dare license him. It is unlikely there is a U.S. federal commission on the horizon, but if fighters have health insurance access, all commissions will have no excuse to require needed medical tests. Fighters and their handlers will no longer be able to shop a fighter with medical problems to weaker commissions with less stringent requirements. ■



Will healthcare reform help keep damaged boxers out of the ring?

By Jim Bagg

Where There's An Ill, There's Jose

There's a great *Saturday Night Live* sketch from the '80s (back when the show was still capable of producing an occasional laugh), where Bill Shatner speaks at a *Star Trek* convention and famously tells all the pointy-eared Trekkies, "Get a life, people!" Well, that line extends to other conventions as well, such as sports memorabilia conventions where hopeless dweebs throw away thousands of dollars for a near-mint-condition piece of cardboard, Republican national conventions where war-mongers congratulate each other for spending money we don't have in search of weapons that don't exist, and, of course, WBC conventions. That's where Jose Sulaiman and his band of merry leeches plot new ways to marginalize the sport of boxing and line their pockets at the expense of the brave fighters who spill their blood for our entertainment. So let Captain James T. Bagg say it just once to Jose and all of his followers: Get a life, people! (And get the hell out of mine, while you're at it.)

There are two ways to greet the news that comes out of these WBC conventions: with laughter or with anger. The Baggareeno will try to mix them both as he looks back at the November 2009 convention, where the WBC Board of Buffoons reached new levels of idiocy. Here's a look at the Baggmeister's top five "No way, Jose" moments of pure lunacy from this latest convention, where Sulaiman seemed determined to bury Gilberto Mendoza and the WBA in the previously competitive race for who could do more to destroy the credibility of our sport:

1. Sulaiman pushes to enforce a rule preventing fathers from working their sons' corners: Okay, Jose, we'll go along with this one just as soon as you pink-slip your son Mauricio and as soon Gilberto Mendoza Jr. gets his resume together and goes on some job interviews.

Believe it or not, the WBC actually has had a rule for years that bans fathers from working the corner, but it just wasn't being observed (maybe because a lot of boxers compete in free countries where their governments provide them with basic human rights that Sulaiman doesn't have the authority to overrule).

At this particular convention in Jeju, South Korea, Dr. Paul Wallace, the chairman of the WBC's medical advisory board (and presumably as qualified a medical expert as Dr. Doolittle,

Sulaiman has perfected the art of ruining the Sweet Science

PHOTO BY JAIME LOPEZ/LATIN CONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

The Monthly Mailbagg

One of the great benefits of a Mailbagg is that sometimes the readers insult deserving targets in boxing and the Baggsphyxiation can pass those insults along without having to be the bad guy. Here's a perfect example:

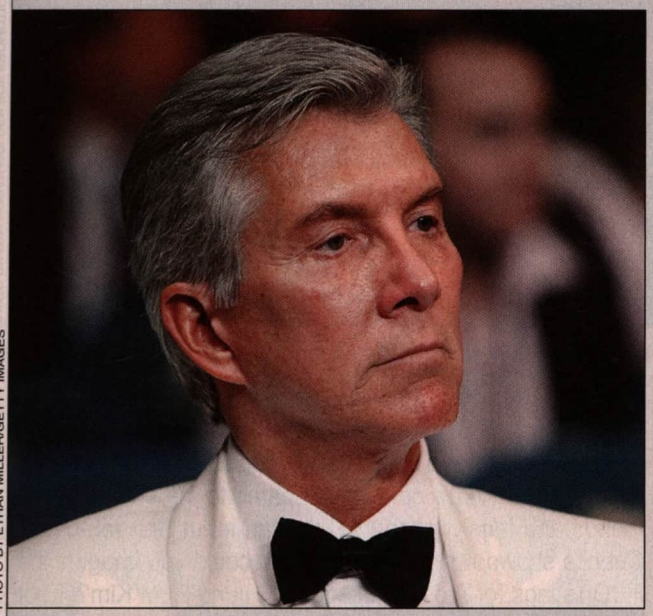


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Not everybody loves Buffer

Dear Baggalicious,

Did you hear that Michael Buffer just celebrated his 65th birthday? I have a two-part question for you. First, how much work do you think he's had done to look so good at such an advanced age? And second, who do you see becoming the most overpaid, overrated ring announcer when he retires?

Zachary Porter
Toronto, Ontario

Zach-Attack,

Gee, not a big Buffer fan, huh? Because the Baggleberry shares some of your bitterness toward the man who gets paid more to do less than anyone this side of an *American Idol* judge, he'll gladly answer your snide, sarcastic questions. First, the amount of work done: More than the amount of work done in a Hector Camacho Jr. training camp, less than the amount of work done in a Manny Pacquiao training camp. Second, the future of ring announcing: Come on, who are we kidding? Buffer's going to live to be 110, dating 22-year-olds every step of the way. That's how good his deal with the devil is. So he isn't retiring anytime soon. But when he finally does, Jimmy Lennon VII seems like a safe bet to be the best in the business.

Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman, or Drs. Steel Hammer and Iron Fist), claimed that a study in California determined that the predominant factor contributing to ring deaths is fathers in corners. Yes, he really said this. And no, he didn't cite any specific examples.

If Doc Wallace had claimed the study showed that father-son boxing partnerships have a tendency to kill father-son relationships outside the ring, the Baggpipe would give him a little respect. That is indeed one unfortunate, and very common, result of fathers training sons. But ring deaths? Sorry, not buying it. If anything, a father is *more* likely to stop a fight before it's too late. (For example, recall Felix Trinidad Sr. running into the ring to save his son against Bernard Hopkins when the ref seemed willing to let it go a little longer.)

And let's say we start enforcing this cockamamie rule. Where do we draw the line on fatherhood? Diego Corrales was trained for a while by his stepfather, Ray Woods. Would that be legal, even though Woods probably loved him more than his bio-dad did? Andre Dirrell is trained by his grandfather—is that okay? Chris Byrd's dad is his trainer and his mom is his cutperson. Is Papa Byrd out but Mama Byrd gets to stay?

It takes an extraordinarily stupid decree to top the list of worst ideas to come out of a WBC convention, and this one is indeed stupid enough to make you wonder if "Sulaiman" is Spanish for "Gump."

2. Sulaiman suspends Chris Arreola six months for foul language: This is professional boxing, a sport that airs on HBO and Showtime, not some kiddie show on Nickelodeon. Adults curse sometimes. Especially after you get beaten upside the head by Vitali Klitschko for 10 rounds, you're entitled to drop a few F-bombs. And where was this indignant opposition to blue language when Mike Tyson was fighting for WBC titles? If swear words are such a problem, why isn't David Diaz serving a lifetime ban for his interview after he lost his WBC strap to Manny Pacquiao?

Thankfully, Jose doesn't have the power to actually ban anybody from boxing. He just suspended Arreola from appearing

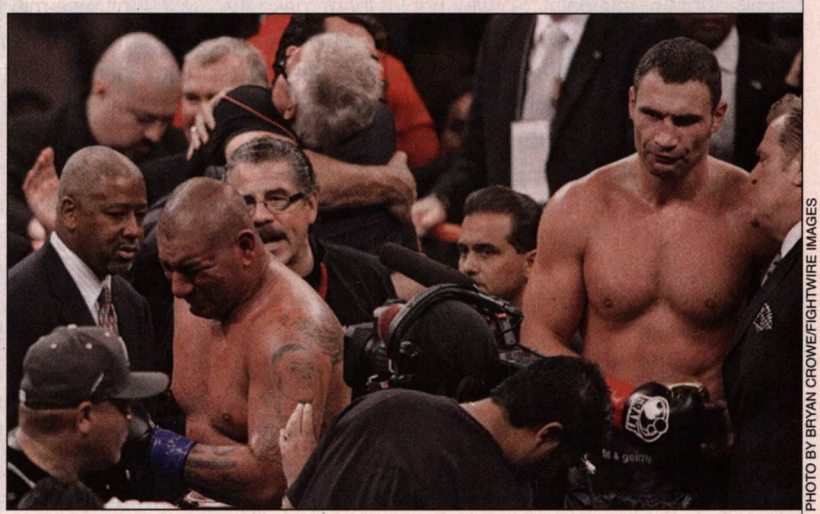


PHOTO BY BRYAN CROWE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Crying is okay, but cursing is not

in the WBC rankings for six months. We guess that means the tattooed tub of goo won't be getting an immediate rematch with Klitschko. Beyond that, it means nothing. Way to lay the hammer down, Jose.

3. Sulaiman asks Shane Mosley to apologize to the WBC for not wanting to fight for their title: Apparently, Sulaiman was offended that Mosley opted to fight Antonio Margarito for the WBA belt in January '09 instead of facing Andre Berto for the WBC belt. How dare Sugar Shane! Can you believe Mosley escaped jail time for this unpardonable offense?

Anyway, now that Mosley is planning to fight Berto, Sulaiman will only allow the alphabet unification bout to take place if Mosley gets down on his knees, kisses Jose's ring, lick-shines his shoes, and says he's sorry. Luckily for Shane, the Baggnoplasty has his apology scripted for him:

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Jose wants to prevent Vazquez-Marquez IV

"Dearest Jose, creator of the heavens and earth, I'm so sorry that you're such an egomaniacal douchebag. You have two options: Sanction this fight and steal three percent of our paychecks, or keep asking me to apologize and get nothing. On second thought, please keep asking me to apologize. I'm much bigger than your silly green belt, and that three percent will go a long way toward the monthly payments to my ex-wife. And you're such a scuzbucket that I'd rather the money end up in her pockets than yours."

4. Sulaiman opposes a fourth Israel Vazquez-Rafael Marquez fight: Sulaiman's exact words were, "Those two will kill each other. They are such warriors, one or both will be finished after a fourth fight." Jose, your sentiment is reasonable. It's admirable not to want to see these great fighters getting hurt. Unfortunately, you're too thick to realize that preventing them from fighting each other will do nothing to achieve that goal.

As this magazine went to press, negotiations for the fight were off (at least for now), but that's beside the point. If you saw Vazquez' comeback fight against Angel Priolo, you know he's in danger against any opponent, and Marquez is in a similar boat at this point. So why not let them make the most money possible by putting life and limb on the line against each other, rather than putting themselves at even greater risk against separate opponents who are younger, perhaps bigger and stronger, and will earn them less money?

Thanks for caring, Jose. But how about opposing the horrible mandatory-defense mismatches you've forced upon the public for decades instead of evenly matched bouts guaranteed to entertain?

5. Sulaiman recommends a six-man tournament to determine a mandatory junior welter challenger, involving no fighters you've ever heard of: They can bill this one as the "Stupid Six." Or perhaps "Su-ward's Folly." Sulaiman wants a mandatory challenger to force Devon Alexander to waste his time against, and since number-one rated Manny Pacquiao (who just happens to be the division's real champion and shouldn't be anybody's contender) isn't available, the next six fighters are Ionut Dan Ion, Ajose Olusegun, Ali Cheebah, Cesar Cuenca, Prawet Singwangcha, and Jung Bum Kim.

If you thought the crowds at Jacksonville Jaguars games were pathetic, that's nothing compared to the 48 people (all friends and family, of course) that an Ionut Dan Ion-Cesar Cuenca showdown would draw. And could you imagine the HBO ratings for Ajose Olusegun vs. Jung Bum Kim?! That might score as big as an *Arli$$* rerun.

You gotta love Jose Sulaiman. Whenever boxing hands him a delicious glass of lemonade, he finds a way to turn it back into lemons, then urinate all over them.

Glove, American-Style

There's a common line of thinking in boxing that what we need most is an American heavyweight to get excited about. And while that would indeed be a good thing for the sport, it's not really true. The next great heavyweight doesn't need to be American. He just needs to fight like an American.

Pardon the stereotype, but when fans think of American heavyweights, they tend to think of warriors like Evander Holyfield, Rocky Marciano, Jack Dempsey, and Joe Frazier, offense-minded battlers who consistently gave the people their money's worth. And when fans think of modern European heavyweights, they think of jabbers and grabbers, enormously tall specimens who prefer boxing smart to fighting fun.

No question about it, the Klitschko brothers are good fighters. But their styles are ruining the heavyweight division. With David Haye's decision win over Nicolay Valuev in November, all of the heavyweight belts remain property of Europe. But at least one of them belongs to a fighter with an American style of fighting.

You wouldn't necessarily know it from the Valuev fight, where Haye had no choice but to be a little boring and defensive if he wanted to win, but "The Hayemaker" provides thrills. He's a good heavyweight who fights like an American. He could never beat a Klitschko, and he might not even be able to defeat another RING-rated heavyweight besides the hairy slab of concrete that is Valuev. But for however long he lasts as a belthold-

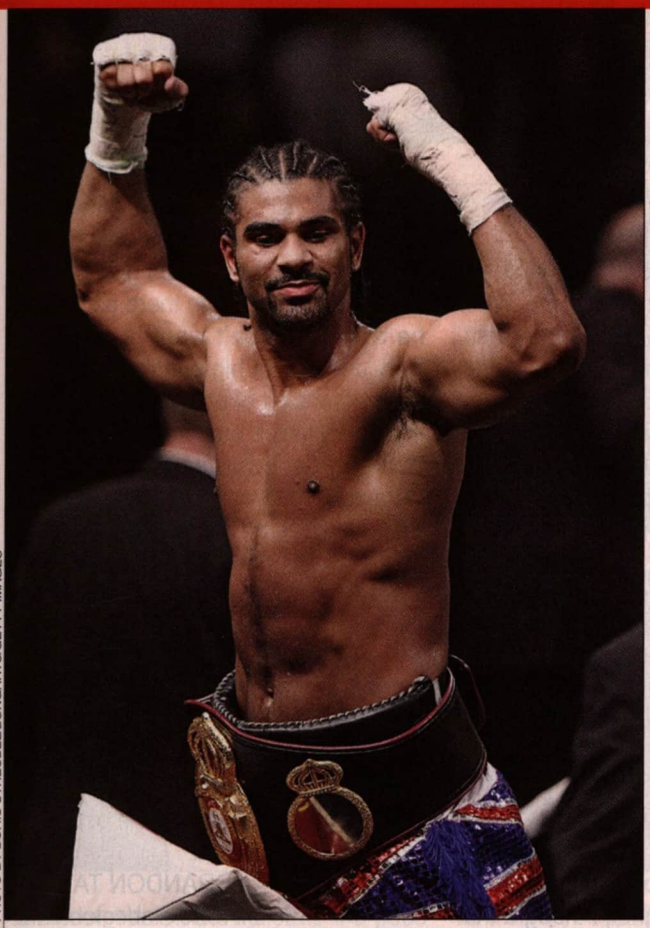


PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Haye is a Brit who fights like a Yank

er, he'll be the most fun thing going in the heavyweight division and the closest thing we have to an American champion.

For the first time since Elizabeth Hurley, something good has come out of England. Hugh Grant may have shoved Liz aside for a hooker, but the Baggerpool would never betray Haye that way, even if a better-looking hooker (left-hooker, that is) comes along.

And The Stingray Goes To ...

Martin Tucker, an unknown 30-year-old junior welterweight from Toledo, Ohio, who brought an uninspiring 6-4 record into Madison Square Garden to face 13-0 Jersey City hotshot Michael Torres and ended up producing the most jaw-dropping New York whacking of a local kid since Sonny Corleone met his fate at the tollbooths. Tucker scored a pair of knockdowns, which goes a long way in a six-round fight, and the underdog captured a 57-56 decision on all three cards.

It was a spectacular way to kick off the Juan Manuel Lopez-Rogers Mtagwa card, which nearly ended with a Stingray for the ages. But in the end, Lopez held Mtagwa off, and Tucker, in turn, held Mtagwa off for this month's Stingray honors. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Tucker snaps Torres winning streak

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 114, Blue Bell, PA 19422.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Necessary Rematch

After 11 defenses in 28 months, I thought nobody could take the WBC 108-pound title away from Edgar Sosa. However, in his last fight against Rodel Mayol, he was a victim of one of the worse headbutts I have ever seen. Mayol went in like a raging bull, head first with no intention of a punch. It is hard to fight back after a hit like that. Mayol is no easy boxer either; let's not forget he gave Ivan Calderon his hardest fight. But Edgar Sosa should be granted an immediate rematch. I would pay to see that fight on pay-per-view.

MANUEL ROSALES
Durango, Mexico

All-Time Great

When I said that Manny Pacquiao would stop Miguel Cotto, along with the other elite welterweights, I thought that they would be quick knockouts, not methodical destructions. I give respect to Cotto for hanging in there as long as he did, but I don't want to hear that Pacquiao isn't a big puncher anymore. I looked at a lot of previews of the fight, and every single one of them gave Cotto the edge in power. I can hear the Pacquiao haters saying now that this doesn't prove anything because Cotto was already damaged from Antonio Margarito and that Joshua Clottey further exposed him.

Pacquiao said Floyd Mayweather doesn't want to fight him. After the Cotto fight, can you blame Mayweather? If they do fight, Pacquiao knocks Mayweather out. Thirty years from now, history will say Pacquiao is one of the top five fighters of all-time.

BRANDON TAYLOR
blt1990@sbcglobal.net

Manny Pacquiao drives Miguel Cotto into the ropes en route to a 12th-round TKO victory. Reader Brandon Taylor writes to remind us that he predicted Pacquiao's knockout victory in a letter published in the November 2009 issue.

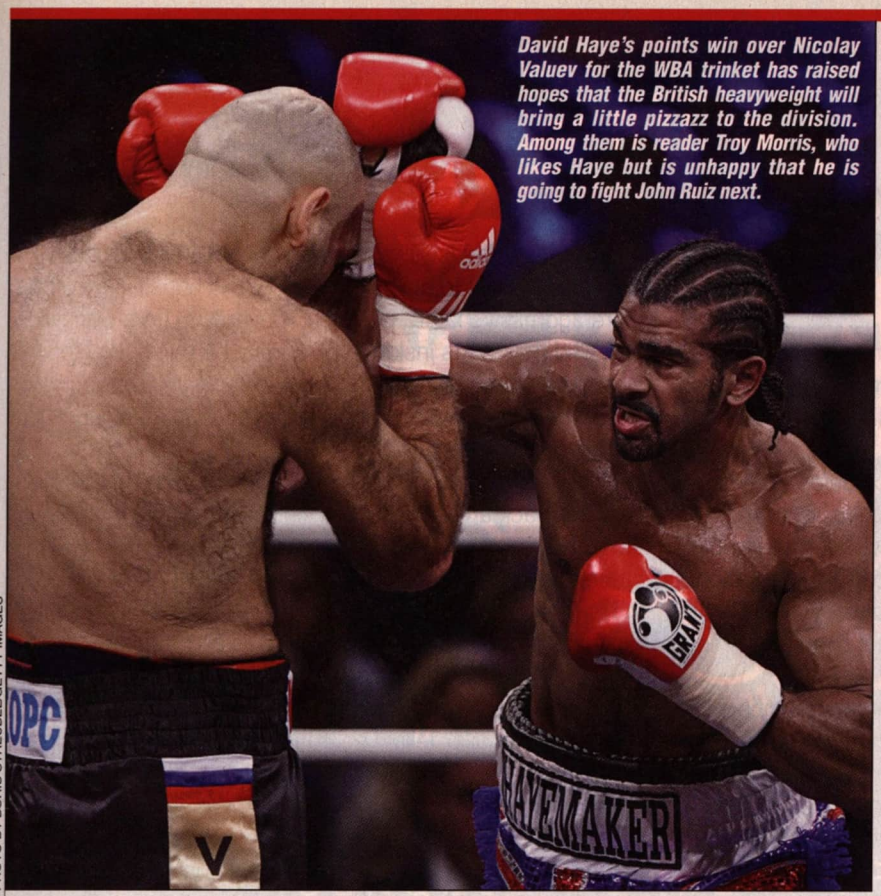
PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Two Fights, Two Comments

I have comments on two recent fights:

Pacquiao-Cotto: It is obvious Manny Pacquiao is the real deal, but Cotto has regressed as a top-level fighter. In his last three fights against good opposition (Margarito, Clottey, and Pacquiao), he looked fairly good in the earlier rounds, but backpedaled when hurt and took too many shots in the later rounds. He needs to reevaluate his career.

Kessler-Ward: Either Mikkel Kessler was highly overrated or Andre Ward has been hiding his light under a basket. Kessler's fight against Joe Calzaghe was much more competitive, and I thought Kessler held his own. But against Ward, he looked like a befuddled



David Haye's points win over Nicolay Valuev for the WBA trinket has raised hopes that the British heavyweight will bring a little pizzazz to the division. Among them is reader Troy Morris, who likes Haye but is unhappy that he is going to fight John Ruiz next.

PHOTO BY BORIS STREUBEL/GETTY IMAGES

amateur. He let Ward dictate the pace and was forced into the role of counter-puncher, when he actually punched at all. I need to see Ward against a better fighter, like Arthur Abraham, before I'm convinced he's as good as he looked against Kessler.

JOE THOMPSON
Charlotte, NC

Happy About Haye

I am officially jumping on the David Haye bandwagon, and I'll go out on a limb and predict that, if given the chance, he will clean up the heavyweight division. I'm very happy that Haye successfully dethroned Nicolay Valuev. Finally, there might be a chance for a decent fight in the heavyweight division. Haye is not yet great, but he's certainly great for boxing. He's charismatic, good looking, and fearless. It's too bad he has to be bothered with WBA contender for life, John Ruiz. How many shots at that plastic title will Ruiz get? David Haye is the future of the heavyweight division.

TROY MORRIS
Calcutta, OH

Sorry, Charley

I am writing to let you know I am Mrs. Julia Burley, the wife of the late Charley Burley. You do not know me or Charley. We were never poor. We owned our own home and raised three children and were well respected in our town. We were given the key to our city as well-respected people. And we would not want to live in Mr. Williams' building. So you can redo that statement you put in THE RING magazine, as people called me to let me know such a nasty thing was written about my husband.

Thanks for nothing.

JULIA BURLEY
Pittsburgh, PA

Editor's note: Mrs. Burley is referring to an article that ran in the August 2009 issue ("The Paul Williams Paradox: The Good, The Not-So-Good, And The Man Nobody Wants To Fight") in which Don Stradley wrote that Burley "died broke and alone." THE RING has nothing but the utmost respect for Charley Burley and would like to thank Mrs. Burley for setting the record straight. ■

DON'T MISS WILLIAM DETTLOFF

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Always insightful and often provocative, William Dettloff, The Ring's senior writer, is the thinking-fans' columnist, a writer who never settles for the same old stale commentary you've already read a dozen times. For example, here's Dettloff's take on a handful of hot topics:

The effects of steroids: If steroids compelled men to kill their families, the terrible sound of James Toney, married father of six, slinging deviled eggs down his throat would right now be echoing throughout his otherwise silent, corpse-strewn house.

Post-fight interviews: If you too were wondering why Vic Darchinyan made no real sense five minutes after getting pancaked, consider that five minutes before, he'd gotten pancaked. Why are people always surprised when a fighter who's just suffered a concussion says nonsensical things?

The white stuff: If you've never seen (Alexander) Povetkin, picture mayonnaise in short pants and gloves. This guy is so white he makes Sultan Ibragimov look like Wesley Snipes.

Dettloff on ringtv.com ... The perfect way to answer the week's opening bell!

4748/02.08

By Don Stradley

Small Heavyweights Thinking Big

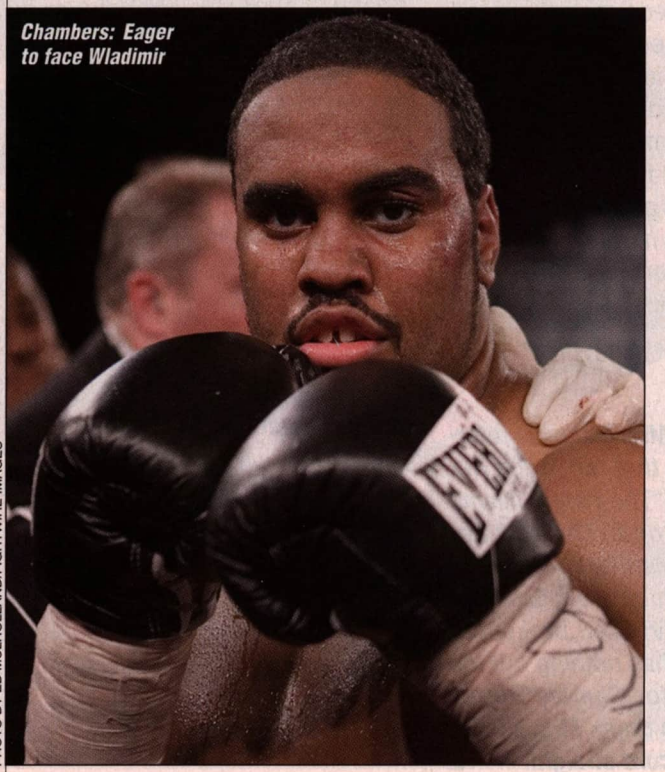
The next step in "Fast" **Eddie Chambers**' career may take him across the Atlantic for a springtime 2010 showdown with heavyweight champion **Wladimir Klitschko**, most likely in Germany.

Chambers has fought in Germany twice before, but never against a fighter as formidable as Klitschko, who not only towers over Chambers by several inches, but also is riding an 11-fight winning streak. Klitschko also is an international star with one of the largest fan bases in boxing. Still, Chambers has no trepidation about taking his act overseas to fight the champ.

"It's an open-minded community over there," Chambers told THE RING. "People over there are open to different cultures. Of course, I'd rather have the fight here; I'm up against a very popular fighter, and I hope there will be some fairness."

Klitschko's size advantage is of no concern to Chambers either.

"I'll use my attributes to combat his," Chambers said, pointing out that his last opponent, **Alexander Dimitrenko**, was actually taller than Klitschko. "I'm alright with fighting taller guys. I just imagine the guy is my height, and I use my own skills. Because he's so big, he can't combat my style the way a smaller fighter would.



Chambers: Eager to face Wladimir

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

"He (Klitschko) is still a safe fighter, and tries to dictate with his jab. He wants to make sure he doesn't get hit. He's a little more aggressive lately, because he wants to be a worldwide star, and that starts inside the ring. But he can't stray too far away from his style; he's still safe. I agree with him, you have to do what works best for you. That is, until we meet, and then it's *not* going to work.

"The biggest key will be to make him uncomfortable. He's very laid back and relaxed. In every fight he's lost, he's panicked. Nobody likes to get hit, but some tolerate it better than others. I want him to feel, *I can't take this much more*. I'll be in his face all night. And I want him to feel that his punches are futile, that he can't land anything. I'll be like a fly, and he'll be trying to swat me and getting frustrated. But I'll be stinging him a whole lot harder than a fly."

Another smaller fellow encroaching on the heavyweights is **Tomasz Adamek**, THE RING's cruiserweight champion. Adamek debuted at heavyweight last October by stopping **Andrew Golota** in Lodz, Poland. **Kathy Duva** of Main Events has mapped out a schedule for Adamek that includes a bout on February 6 in Adamek's adopted hometown of Newark, New Jersey, followed by a high profile HBO fight in the spring. A title bout with someone named Klitschko, or perhaps new WBA titlist **David Haye**, could happen by the end of 2010.

"The next great group of heavyweights will be cruiserweights, faster guys with good movement, good power, and good chins," Duva told THE RING.

But was beating a tired old warhorse like Golota an accurate gauge of how Adamek will do in the land of the giants?

"Certain things about fighting Golota were valuable," said Duva. "The fight was such a big deal in Poland, as big as Lewis-Tyson was over here. Being in that kind of spotlight was valuable in that Adamek performed well with all of that pressure on him. When he finally fights a Klitschko, he's not going to be some guy who is 25-0 with no experience in big fights."

According to Duva, Adamek won't be giving up THE RING cruiserweight belt, because there's still some interest in facing the winner of the **Bernard Hopkins**-**Roy Jones** bout.

Listen Up

Rogers Mtagwa, who performed so valiantly in a losing effort against **Juan Manuel Lopez** last October, will face **Yuriorkis Gamboa** on January 23 at Madison Square Garden in New York. Lopez meets WBO featherweight titlist **Steven Luevano** in the co-feature. This gives fans another chance to see Gamboa and Lopez on the same bill, as Top Rank moves closer to matching them in what could be termed a mini-mega-fight. As of press time, it was not clear if the fight would be presented on HBO or as a Top Rank pay-per-view. ■

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